“THERE WILL ALWAYS BE KHÖÖMEI IF TYVANS ARE ON THE LAND.”: MODERN IDENTITY AND TRANSMISSION OF FOLKSONG IN THE CENTER OF ASIA

by

DAMON ROBLEY POSTLE

(Under the Direction of Alison Farley and Jean Kidula)

ABSTRACT

The Republic of Tyva and her people, since mid-twentieth century, exist in a colonized state first by the Soviet Union (1944-1991) and currently by the Russian Federation (1991-Present). In an increasingly nationalistic Russification policy inside Mr. Putin’s Russia, the people of Tyva continue to live as a marginalized population and the target of rampant discrimination at home. While traditionally the Tyvan people have relied on geographic isolation as a form of defense, both indigenous language and music, while not classified as endangered are under pressure due to continued internal Russification policies. This mixed methods dissertation explored modern Tyvan identity, musical culture, and music learning by means of immersive field work in Tyva and Mongolia described in autoethnography, a Likert style survey (*N = 168*) to rank the importance of markers of modern Tyvan identity, and finally an extended long form questionnaire (*N = 44*) designed to explore the musical lives, teaching and learning of Tyvan Vocal Music (khöömei), and Tyvan Instrumental Music (doshpuluur, igil, chanzy, kengirge, shoor, chadagan, khomus). Both music and voice function as embodied forms of memory that bind the Tyvans to their ancestral lands and pre-Soviet non-colonized nomadic life.

INDEX WORDS: *Tyva, khöömei, throat singing, embodiment, post-colonial, music education, indigenous culture, Mongolia, Soviet Union, Russian Federation, indigenous music, nomadism, cultural identity, autoethnography*

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DEDICATION

There is no way to fully thank the following people here, but I will give my best. Completing this dissertation project could not have been done without the support of my family here in the United States and those who adopted me into their families in the Center of Asia. Chinchi Suge-Maadyr, Bichen Anai-ool, Helga Sundui, Aira Mongush and Ayu Maydyr my groovin' Tyvan sisters, when the stars align we will meet again at Coffee Man for some good talks and iced americanos - Четтирдим силерге. Alash Ensemble - Bady-Dorzhu Ondar, Ayan-ool Sam and Ayan Shirizhik for those first khöömei lessons, invitation to come to Tyva, eagle dancing at Khadyn, back yard barbeques and 2AM shashlik in Tanzibey - Четтирдим силерге. Sean, Brian, Michael, Robert and Haller, we make a good travel team. I treasure our meetups here in the states and in Tyva. Odna and Mark, thank you for adopting me into the extended Mongolian family in both Charlotte, North Carolina and Ulaanbaatar. I can't wait to be riding camels and pushing travel vans up the side of the mountains with you again soon баярлалаа!

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Introduction

Statement of Purpose

December 26, 1991 was a consequential day in 20th century history. The Soviet Union ceased to exist and the new Russian Federation began to form. Modern Russia, and the former Soviet Union, were never homogenous societies, as much as state propaganda would try to promote. According to the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (2020) there are at least 180 ethnic groups in the modern Russian Federation. The Tyvans, a Turkic people, are one of the larger of these ethnic groups with a population of approximately 250,000. The Republic of Tyva was the last of the former Soviet semi-autonomous republics to join the Russian Federation. Today, the Republic of Tyva is still a member of the Russian Federation, but also still semi-autonomous.

After nearly fifty years of Soviet political subjugation and "Russification" policy, the Tyvans, like all ethnic groups in post-Soviet Russia, found themselves both resurrecting and creating a modern cultural identity. Music, specifically Tyvan Vocal Music and Tyvan Instrumental Music is the predominate way Tyvans manifest their culture in the modern world. Mongush (2006) found that music was a key component in formation of modern Tyvan identity in Post-Soviet Russia. Further, Beahrs (2014) suggests that Tyvans have a pre-Soviet cultural memory of nomadic life, and that music is a way of connecting the past to a modern Tyvan identity.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of music and music education in post-Soviet Tyvan cultural identity. The second major part of this study was to examine how the

sense of Tyvan identity influences the teaching and learning of Tyvan Vocal Music and Tyvan Instrumental Music. Music is viewed as a key marker of Tyvan cultural identity (Beahrs, 2014; Mongush, 2006), however related research into the role of music education and the development of cultural identity is limited. To complete this investigation there were three major components:

a) First, three consecutive summers (2017, 2018 and 2019) of field work in both Tyva and Mongolia. The first two summers of fieldwork in 2017 and 2018 took place in Tyva. Goals in Tyva included learning Tyvan language, study with a master teacher, continuation of building relationships, and finally to observe and participate in daily life activities in Tyva. As the focus is specifically on music, music education and cultural identity, this study cannot be a comprehensive ethnographic study of the entirety of music in Tyva. The summer of 2019 was spent in the field in Mongolia. Field work served as a way to differentiate between Tyvan and Mongolian music and culture. From the time in the field, an autoethnography was completed. The purpose of the autoethnography was to better synthesize, understand and explain cultural experiences I witnessed and participated in while in the field (Ellis et al., 2011).
b) Second, a Likert Scale survey was disseminated with the support of the Tyvan Cultural Center and International Khöömei Academy. Participants were musicians, music educators and interested parties. The initial survey was used for participants to rate makers of cultural identity in Tyva. The final question of the survey was to inquire into the participants' interest in further participation in this study by way of a second long form questionnaire.
c) The third and final major component of this study was a twenty-two question long form questionnaire. Prior to the dissemination of the survey and interview, questions were

based on work by Schippers (2010) and adapted with consultation with the advisory committee of this dissertation. Upon completion of the investigation, inferences were made related for the implementation of regional folk song and culturally responsive teaching practices in K-12 as well as higher education. Further recommendations were made to the possible ramifications for music education in the United States in regard to better serving underrepresented populations.

Research Questions

This study explored the following research questions:

- What is the role of music, specifically Tyvan vocal music (khöömei [https://www.alashensemble.com/QT_xoomei.htm], sygyt [https://www.alashensemble.com/QT_sygyt.htm], kargyraa [https://www.alashensemble.com/QT_kargyraa.htm]) and Tyvan instrumental music in modern Tyvan identity?
- How do Tyvans culturally identify (Russian, Tyvan, a hybrid)
- How is folk song transmitted from one generation to the next in Tyva?
- What role does folksong have in modern Tyvan identity?
- What cultural traditions do Tyvans use to identify as Tyvan?

Rationale for the Study

Within the current literature, there is limited scholarly output that directly explores Tyvan cultural identity, Tyvan music education and how the two might be influencing each other. Both Merriam (1967) and Nettl (2015) suggest a strong relationship between cultural identity and music while, Davis (2005) shows that music education is supporting cultural identity through the teaching and acceptance of "world music" (p. 56) in the classroom. Therefore, the intention of

this dissertation was to document and analyze, with autoethnography, descriptive and qualitative inquiry methodology, connections between post-Soviet cultural identity of the Tyvan people. Finally, how then would this post-Soviet modern Tyvan identity reflect on the transmission of folk song in Tyva.

Delimitations of the Study

This investigation specifically was based on anonymous survey data from within and outside the folk music world in Tyva. This study did not have the scope to take into account informal teaching that happens outside of learning from master teachers, let alone smaller cities, villages and the *aal* (The aal [аал]) is defined as the countryside beyond villages, where herders live in isolation). It is important to note that the majority of the Tyvan people do not live in Kyzyl, therefore this investigation is not a complete study of the entirety of all teaching of folksong in the Republic of Tyva. This investigation also did not include Western music education that also occurs in the Republic of Tyva. Further, the approximately 30 Tyvan people that reside in the United States of America were not surveyed or consulted on how they wished to see their culture presented in American classrooms. Member checking also became an issue due to current geopolitical issues. A final major delimitation of the investigation was my limited language skills and having to rely heavily on the aid of interpreters and translators.

Risks and Benefits

Risks

I did not anticipate any risks from participating in this research. The researcher let participants know that they may request that the survey and questionnaire stop at any time. Pseudonyms were to be used in any ensuing publications. Finally, given the current political climate within Tyva and the Russian Federation at large, any and all political language is based

on my field work and sole interpretations of survey responses. Participants in this study did not offer any political opinions that would run afoul of the internal laws of the Russian Federation.

Benefits to Human Subjects

There were no direct benefits for participating in the study as a research subject and no financial incentives were provided.

Benefits to Human Kind

Findings from this study will inform music education, contributing to an understanding of how and why to include culturally relevant folk music in music education. It is hoped that this examination of identity and music education in the Republic of Tyva will contribute to a broader knowledge of Tyvan music education and pedagogy. While this paper deals specifically with Tyvan music, identity and music learning, American music educators should take a lesson from the Tyvans and explore including culturally relevant music and teaching practices with our students.

Statement of Subjectivity

The story of Tyva, the Tyvan people and their culture is one of conquest, colonization, resilience and perseverance. In one form or another Tyva has been under the control of various empires at least since the first century CE (Forsyth, 1992) and today finds itself a semi-autonomous republic within the modern Russian Federation. The Russian Federation is the largest nation on Earth, spanning nine time zones and having incredibly diverse indigenous populations. Tannu-Tyva or the Tyvan People's Republic was nominally independent from 1921 to 1944 and detailed further in the second chapter of this dissertation. The Altai-Sayan area of Siberia, itself, has been occupied for at least 40,000 years, and DNA studies (Dulik et al., 2012; Starikovskaya et al., 2005) suggest that pre-history occupants of this land migrated out of the

area into North America during the ice age. Given the modern history of Tyva and the Tyvan people it has been determined by myself and dissertation co-chairs that viewing aspects of this study through postcolonial and neocolonial framework is possible.

It is an interesting time to be an American with a deep personal respect and scholarly interest in the Russian Federation. I grew up in the final decade of the Cold War, and had my first cultural exchange with the then USSR in the Summer of 1990. My family hosted a Tatar gentleman from Kazan during the Goodwill Games. Four years later, the same gentleman from Kazan invited my family to visit St. Petersburg, Russia for the 1994 games. For my parents and grandparents, who also came to St. Petersburg that summer, it must have been surreal to set foot in Russia following the Cold War. From these experiences, I developed a lifelong passion for everything Russian. Graduate school has allowed me travel through the former Central Asian Soviet Republics as well southern Siberia, East Africa and Mongolia.

Tyva is a special place not only to myself, but countless others who practice the music, learn the language, study the culture and make the long journey to the center of Asia. I was exposed to Tyvan music, by chance, as a senior in high school in Everett, Washington in 1998. That first exposure to a recording made a decade earlier by Dr. Theodore Levin for Smithsonian-Folkways Records (Alekseev, 1990) sparked a lifelong passion for Tyva and Tyvan music, both instrumental and vocal. Transitioning from student to educator, doctoral candidate, researcher and back to educator as well as moving from Seattle to Connecticut to North Carolina to Georgia and back to New York City the one constant has always been Tyva.

Looking at Tyva through the lens of a researcher is not without significant difficulty. I have come to Tyva first as a listener of the music, next a practitioner of the music, a traveler and now a scholar. I have many close friends and colleagues in Tyva, who are now collaborating

with me in my research. They are not and will never be research subjects. I have been warmly embraced by Tyva and the Tyvan people, due in part to participation in the 2017 Хөөмei in the Center of Asia Festival. My Tyvan friends have given me a Tyvan nickname, largely due to my stature, Баглааш-оол (pronounced Baglaash-ool) literally meaning “Hitching Post Boy”. There is a proverb in Tyva that essentially says *while your camp might move, the hitching post remains to mark home*. When we converse in either Tyvan or English (in Tyva or America), rarely am I called by my birth first name. In addition to being welcomed into the Tyvan culture, I am honored to be introduced as a khöömeizhi (singer of Tyvan Vocal Music). In Tyva, I am neither an insider, but nor am I a complete outsider. While I will never fully understand the entirety of Tyvan culture, this work represents my best attempt to present an accurate account of identity, musical culture, and music education in the Republic of Tyva. Шуде!!

Chapter 2

Review of Related Literature

Tyva and the Tyvan People

The fate Tannu-Tyva *(Тыва Арат Республик*) was constantly on the mind of the late physicist, Dr. Richard Feynman, who as a child collected the triangle shaped postage stamps complete with enigmatic images from a far off land (Leighton, 2000). Illustration 1 is a map of Tyva inside the Russian Federation.

Illustration 1

Map of Tyva inside the Russian Federation

(GISGeorgraphy, 2022b)

The Republic of Tyva (*Республика Тыва)*, a member of the Russian Federation, is located in South East Siberia in the center of Asia. The capital city, Kyzyl (*Кызыл)*, which translates to “red” in the Tyvan language, sits at 51°43′N 94°27′E where the Bii-Xem (Бий-Хем)

and Kaa-Xem (Каа-Хем) rivers meet to create the Ylyg Xem (Улуг-Хем) also called the Yenesei River. The most recent census data indicates there are 327,383 permanent residents in the Republic of Tyva with a positive growth year over of 2,960 births (+ 0.9%) (Federal Statistics Service, 2020). Looking further into population data, Tyva is a majority ethnic state, with Slavic peoples being the minority. This is not common for most ethnic republics in the Russian Federation.

The Tyvan language is Turkic and closely related to Kazakh, Altai, Volga-Tatar, Bashkir, Chulym and Baraba. Due to being invaded and subjugated in the 13th century by Chinggis Khan and the Mongolian Empire, the Tyvan language shares many linguistic cognates with modern Mongolian language (Forsyth, 1992). Studies show that the vast majority of Tyvans (90+%) speak Tyvan as their primary language and have a forced bilingualism as Russian is the official language of the Russian Federation (Poppe, 2008).

Forsyth (1992) provides an in-depth history of the geographic area that is now known as Tyva. As early as the 9th Century BCE the Altai-Sayan region was inhabited by Turkic people, specifically the ancient Scythians and by the first century CE the Yenesei Kyrgyz people would become the dominant force until the late 19th Century. The history of Tyva is that of colonialism from various peoples including the Yenisei Kyrgyz, Mongolian Empire, Chinese Empire, Russian Empire, Soviet Union and now the modern Russian Federation (Forsyth, 1992). Indigenous herders and nomadic peoples have inhabited the Altai-Sayan since at least the last ice age. DNA studies confirm that inhabitants of the Altai-Sayan were part of the first peoples to migrate out of Asia into what is now Alaska and the Americas (Dulik et al., 2012; Malyarchuk et al., 2011; Starikovskaya et al., 2005; Watzlawik, 2012; Zegura et al., 2004).

Between 1921 and 1944 Tannu-Tyva was a de-facto independent socialist state. Early in the revolution, Soviet authorities made the determination that Tyva had been illegally annexed by the Russian Empire in 1914, and therefore the Soviet Union had no legal claim to Tyva, thus creating the independent state of Tannu-Tyva. During this time of de-facto independence, the Tyvan government extended religious protection to Tibetan Buddhism and outlawed anti-religious propaganda (Forsyth, 1992). These protections were eventually ended, and the Lamas, and shamans, were purged and executed under Stalin.

While Tyva was nominally independent between 1921 and 1944, the Soviets wished to control the entire Yenisei river area and brought Tyvan students, including Salchak and Anchimaa Toka, to Moscow for political education. Anchimaa would become the first non-hereditary female head of state in modern history, and her husband Salchak led Tyva from 1932-1973. Tannu-Tyva continued to fall under the influence of the Soviet Union and Soviet policies including collectivism which would have had a major impact on the Tyvans, who for millennia had survived as nomadic herders. While collectivism and collective farms were not officially resisted in Tyva, statistics show that 88% of the Tyvans maintained a nomadic lifestyle and only 6.5% of livestock were controlled by the collectives (Forsyth, 1992).

Russification History

Russification is a cultural assimilation policy that began during the reign of Ivan "Grozny" (1547-1584). The policies largely did not begin to take shape until the reign of Alexander II (1855-1881), continued through the Soviet Era. They continue today in Mr. Putin's Russian Federation. As a policy, Russification assimilated the various ethnicities within their territorial borders by encouraging minority populations, including the Tyvans, to give up their language and cultural practices in favor of Russian language and cultural practices. While 19th

century Russification policy allowed for indigenous cultures to exist in the Empire, Weeks (2004) points out that it does not mean that these cultures were necessarily tolerated or accepted. Finally, due to regional history, Tyva largely did not experience 19th century Russification as Tyva was within the borders of non-Russian empires including Mongolia and Imperial China. Tyva, itself did not fully become part of Russia until 1944 when it officially joined the Soviet Union.

Russification in Central and Inner-Asia did not take effect until the 1860s when Imperial Russia gained control of western Turkestan. Western Turkestan encompasses modern day Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and south-eastern Kazakhstan. The aim of the Russification of Turkestan, was to spread, "European Civilization, progress and enlightenment into an isolated and backward region" (Hofmeister, 2016, p. 411). This mentality is reminiscent of the 1887 "Dawes Act", also known as the General Allotment Act, passed by the United States Congress, which was aimed at assimilating Native Americans. It appears that the Russification of Turkestan was pragmatic, at least by 19th Century standards. In examining the historic record, Tsarist officials were more concerned with the *territory* being Russified and not the people. At most, the people of Turkestan were expected to be loyal to the Tsar and State (Hofmeister, 2016). This style of pragmatic Russification would not be policy during the Soviet Era or Mr. Putin's contemporary Russian Federation.

Tyvan – Russian Relations in the 21st Century

To explore Tyvan cultural identity, it is important to understand the relationship that the Tyvans have with Russians and the Russian Federation. Current literature examines this topic in the context of the Russian Federation being a colonial power and attitudes towards the Tyvans. Mr. Putin's political party, United Russia (Единая Россия) is largely a pro-Putin populist

movement. The current party slogan is, “Success of Everyone – Success of Russia” [УСПЕХ КАЖДОГО – УСПЕХ РОССИИ] (United Russia Party, 2021), not unlike other contemporary populist movements.

The concept pushed by the party is a single Russian identity. This idea runs contrary to the reality that there are over 180 indigenous groups within the Russian Federation (IWGIA, 2020). While the IWGIA recognizes 180 indigenous groups in the Russian Federation, the Russian government only recognizes 47 of these groups, 40 of which are located in Siberia and arctic areas (IWGIA, 2021). Governmental methodology for officially recognizing an indigenous group within Russia comes down to population, which must be 50,000 or less (IWGIA, 2021). While the Tyvans have been on their land longer than the majority white Russian population, they do not qualify for indigenous status, nor do groups like the Yakuts in Sakha or Tatars in Tatarstan and Crimea due to their population.

The irony in this population-based designation is that Lenin himself had verifiable Kalmyk ancestry. Lifetime photos show clear epicanthic folds in his eyes, which is predominately seen in people of Asian descent (Sebestyen, 2018). Except for a single statue of Lenin located in Ulan-Ude, the Buryatian capital city, that shows the folds in his eyes, the Soviet Union and Russian Federation have whitewashed in Lenin in all forms of media and art to reflect a Caucasian Kiev Russ ancestry.

In recent years, new education laws have been passed to promote the United Russia ideology. Included in these education laws was a 2018 bill that limits education in indigenous language. Currently in Russia there are 35 recognized languages including Russian, and this new reform makes learning in any of the other 34 recognized languages optional and limiting native language instruction to two hours per week. Prior to this new law, indigenous language used in

education was left to the local officials (Hauer, 2018). Mr. Putin stated that the Russian language is the "Spiritual framework of the country" and that "our state language cannot be replaced with anything" and finally that the teaching of indigenous languages ought to be avoided as it could be construed as "forcing someone to learn a language that is not native to him" (Hauer, 2018, pp. 2-3). At best, this policy is grossly insensitive, but does allow outsiders to witness what should be considered as racist internal policies. This education policy has an impact on all indigenous groups, whether recognized or not, in the Russian Federation, including the Tyvans.

What effect then do these type of policies have specifically on Tyvan-Russian relations? Poppe (2008) examines this topic through official Russian Federation census and survey data. Tyva is an interesting spot to examine ethnic relations due to it being an ethnic republic within the Russian Federation that is a majority non-Russian population. The data collected give an excellent picture into daily inter-ethnic relations in Tyva. Some of the more relevant data points include that of the Russians surveyed ($n = 500$) 0% spoke Tyvan in their house, amongst friends or with colleagues. The data, instead, suggest that often Tyvans are forced to speak Russian when dealing with ethnic Russians. Data further show that Russians tend to not like living as neighbors with Tyvans nor is there much inter-ethnic marriage with Tyvans.

Tyvans surveyed ($n = 499$) have little to no issue being neighbors with Russians, but find it very unacceptable (30.3%) to have an inter-ethnic marriage with a Russian. Most relevant to this dissertation, the survey also looked at issues of cultural identity. The data shows that the Tyvans have a strong ethnic identification, Republican identification and a relatively high Federal identification (Poppe 2008, p. 11). The Russians surveyed show similar data in Ethnic and Federal identification but only half have a strong sense of Republican identification. Lack of Republican identification shows that Russians tend to feel as foreigners in the Republic of Tyva.

The final data points examined how Russians and Tyvans feel about each other. Russians living in Tyva, according to the data, see Tyvans as, "incompetent and immoral" (Poppe 2008, p. 12). While the Tyvans, in turn, do not feel the same about Russian competence and morality. The Tyvans, however, do view Russians in Tyva as both an economic threat and, of importance to this dissertation, a cultural threat (Poppe 2008, p. 11). Given pressures to further Russify the Tyvan people in the 21st century, inter-ethnic relations will continue to be strained in the Republic of Tyva, making a post-Soviet cultural identity more important and possibly difficult to establish and maintain in the Republic of Tyva.

Markers of Cultural Identity

Cultural identity is a difficult and sensitive subject to approach, especially for the etic writer. There are several markers that contribute to the formation of cultural identity including region, music, language and religion (Emielu, 2013). An essential marker of cultural identity is region. While this may sound obvious, it is crucial to understand. In my own teaching, students come from different regions of the Bronx (Parkchester, Hunts Point, Morris Park, Throggs Neck, Castle Hill, etc.) and there is meaning behind being from each of these regions or neighborhoods. In the case of the focus area of this dissertation, region (Kyzyl, Bai Taiga, Southern Tyva, Todzhu, Eastern Tyva, Western Tyva), is an important marker of Tyvan identity.

Shields (2003) shows that not only is region important to cultural identity but can also serve as a symbol of culture (p. 1). By examining region, inferences can be made on socio-economic status of the region (cultural/ethnic enclaves) and can be a starting point for researching intersectional issues (Shields, 2003). Mongush (2006) notes that Tyvans also use region as a marker of identity, including but not limited to, Tes Khem, Ulug Khem, Bii Khem, Barun-Khemchik, Dzun-Khemchik, Mongun Taiga, Sut Khol, Chaa Khol, Bai-Taiga, Erzin,

Todzha and Oviur (p. 277). In the popular folk song, “Ава Тывам” (Ava Tyvam – Mother Tyva), the composer Andrei Mongush includes these regions in the bridge of the song in Kargyraa style, emphasizing the importance of these regional identities.

These regional markers date to Pre-Soviet Tyva when nomadism was widely practiced. Having a regional identity was important in multiple social situations and business dealings. Regional markers are important enough to have two distinct words in the Tyvan language *сөөк* (söök) and *аймак* (aimak). *Сөөк* refers to ancestry, clan, tribe and nationality while *аймак* refers more locally to clan and tribe. Both words have regional markers that Tyvans understand.

Religion is another significant marker of cultural identity, and in Tyva this is no exception. The vast majority of the Tyvan people identify as practicing Tibetan Buddhism, though originally Shamanism was the majority religion in what is now the Tyvan Republic. Buddhism did not arrive in Tyva until the thirteenth century and peacefully co-existed with existing shamanic traditions. Until the rise of communism in the early twentieth century, both Shamanism and Tibetan Buddhism were protected by the Tyvan governments (Mongush, 2019).

Initially under the Russian Empire, the Tyvan People’s Republic, and early Soviet Union, Shamanism and Buddhism were tolerated and protected by local Tyvan authorities. Buddhism was made the official state religion of the People’s Republic of Tyva in 1926. However, this changed as Tyva and the Soviet Union “Stalinized.” 1929 saw the implementation of anti-religious policy in Stalin’s Soviet Union and the purging soon followed. In 1931 there were 28 Buddhist monasteries with a population of 60,000 including 4800 lamas. There were also 725 shamans in Tyva. Both institutions were initially protected by the Tyvan government. As a result of Stalin’s anti-religious policies and purges, which included mass executions, by 1937 only 5 monasteries remained untouched and the population of lamas was 67 (M. V. Mongush 2019, p.

35). Exact data confirming the fate of the Tyvan shamans does not exist, presumably to cover up a heinous crime, however in a brief interview I conducted, a hereditary Tyvan shaman confirmed the shamans had a similar fate of summary execution or imprisonment along with the lamas (Chokbar, 2021).

In post-Soviet Tyva, religious protections were reinstated and have now become important to both individual and national identity. Some in the Tyvan government believe that Buddhism should guide the, "ideological basis of Tyvan statehood" (Mongush, 2019, p. 36). Currently, there is nearly a fifty-fifty split in religious practice amongst the Tyvans, half practicing Tibetan Buddhism and the other half practicing Shamanism (Mongush, 2019). These data do not account for the Russian population of Tyva who practice Orthodox Christianity or the Old Believers who are a denomination of the Russian Orthodox Church who split away in the 17th century over ecumenical differences. It is clear that religion is important to not only individual but national identity.

Language is also an important marker of cultural identity. In a postcolonial/neocolonial Republic of Tyva, bilingualism, according to Poppe (2008) is essential for ethnic Tyvans, but the same cannot be said for the ethnic Russian minority population that lives within the borders of the republic. Chevalier (2010) explores bilingualism in Tyva, noting that within the Russian Federation subtractive bilingualism, in that the second language becomes the primary at the expense of the indigenous language, is common. Due to intergenerational transmission and ongoing efforts within Tyva, the Tyvan language is not being lost. The same cannot be said of the neighboring Altai Republic and Republic of Khakassia. Children report that Russian is now considered, at a rate of 40 – 50%, their primary language. Official census data show that from

1970 to 2002, important here because it has Soviet data, 99% of Tyvans, living in Tyva, reported Tyvan to be their primary language (Chevalier, 2010).

The question must be asked, what is happening in Tyva that bucks the subtractive bilingualism trend in neighboring Turkic language speaking republics? Within the Republic of Tyva, there are several institutions that have helped promote the language. After the Soviet Union collapsed, the Tyvan Ministry of Education made a point of increasing Tyvan language education in the public schools (Chevalier 2010, p. 11), though this has been somewhat mooted by Mr. Putin's 2018 language reform laws. Further, the Tyvan government increased printed material in education materials and print media to upwards of 70% in Tyvan (p. 11). The Tyvan government also supported both radio and television broadcasts in the Tyvan language. Much of this support, was however, set back due to massive economic difficulties in the late 1990s and early 2000s in both the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tyva. Finally, the large concentration of ethnic Tyvans in the republic combined with the geographic isolation of Tyva, has aided in keeping high rates of the Tyvan language being spoken within the republic (Chevalier, 2010). Based on the author of this dissertation's own fieldwork (2017, 2018), the rate of bilingualism in Tyva, with Tyvan being the primary language spoken amongst Tyvans, is still exceptionally high, the capital city, Kyzyl, Russian language appears to be the quasi-official language.

Music Education and Cultural Identity

The literature related to music education directly contributing to formation of cultural identity is quite limited. Literature addressing music education and post-Soviet Tyvan cultural identity is non-existent. McCarthy (1990) specifically explores how music education contributed to modern Irish identity post-1922 when the country gained their independence from the United

Kingdom. When a new national indentity is born after a period of colonial power, the Soviet Union in the case of Tyva, two ideologies are at play: the “Indigenous Way of Life” and the “Spirit of the Age” (McCarthy1990, p. 266).

Much like the Irish in 1922, the Tyvans face similar challenges in reconciling a nostalgia for nomadic life (Beahrs, 2014) and being “modernized” during the Soviet period. In the case of the new Irish cultural identity, it was music education that recognized both traditional Irish musical culture as well as the classical music tradition – both being of equal importance to Irish cultural identity (McCarthy 1990). Irish music educators took a massive step forward establishing several national music organizations to teach both traditional and classical music genres.

Similar steps have been taken in Tyva to teach and promote traditional Tyvan music. The Tyvan Cultural Center in Kyzyl obtained a state teaching license in 2018 that allows for the teaching of traditional culture. Classes for all ages include but are not limited to Tyvan music, art, dance, instrument making and Tyvan language. At the same time, directly across the street from the Tyvan Cultural Center is the Kyzyl Arts College that engages in the western conservatory model of education. Prominent Tyvan traditional musicians from Alash, Khoomei Beat and Oduchu have all studied both western and traditional music at these institutions.

In 2014, Choduraa Tumat founded the Tyvan music degree program at Tyvan State University (TSU). TSU is a pedagogical institution, therefore a major component of the Tyvan music degree program is training teacher of Tyvan music who then work for local village cultural centers and after school music programs as well as maintaining active performance schedules. The degree program offered at TSU is further important because professors, including Tumat, teach Tyvan music using Tyvan pedagogy. Using this Tyvan way of learning is essential

to the music and also teaching of the music. Tumat's program bucks the trend of western style teaching of folk song in Tyva that Süzükei (2017) suggests is not conducive to learning Tyvan folk song. Using non-Tyvan learning methodologies is incompatible with Tyvan music, but most folk music in general do not benefit from Eurocentric methodologies (Hill, 2009; Süzükei, 2017). Most recently on the occasion of Shagaa (lunar new year) 2021, the former head of government in Tyva and current Deputy Chairman of the State Duma, Sholban Kara-ool announced that Tyvan government would be supporting a new Khöömei Academy in Kyzyl to be headed by Bady Dorzhu Ondar.

Davis (2005) saw both formal music education classes as well as children at play as a means of creation and renewal of culture (p. 57). This understanding of cultural identity is in contrast to previous views of culture being passed solely from one generation to the next, a nurture based Aristotelian view. The idea of music acting as a renewal of culture and cultural identity was also explored by Merriam (1967). At a large intertribal powwow, Merriam found through conversations with Flathead people that they reaffirmed who they are through music and dance (p. 158).

The concept of musical identity in context of music education is also worth exploring for the purposes of this dissertation. Hargreaves and Marshall (2003) look at both musical identity and identity in music. To understand their work, it is essential to view their definition of identity in music as how people see themselves in context with music as well as social and cultural roles associated with the music they perform (p. 264). Music identity, on the other hand, explores how music can contribute to the individual's "self-image" (p. 264).

Hargreaves and Marshall (2003) explored student learning in three areas: school, home and a third environment that is neither home or school but defined as music learning that happens

away from teachers and parents (p. 266). While teachers play an important role in our students' musical identity, we are still largely trained in Western European Art Music that may not be in tune with the interests of our students (p. 265). Should culturally relevant folk or popular genres be introduced, will this change student perceptions of school music? Can venues similar to the Tyvan Cultural Center offering relevant regional music influence music identity of students and the population at large? While Hargreaves and Marshall (2003) did not address the questions I have posited, knowing the important role educators have in developing identity in music and musical identity of our students, I do believe that the question is worth exploring.

Similar in population density to Tyva, and working with indigenous peoples, Marsh (2011) explored music education and cultural identity amongst aboriginal students in the remote areas of Australia's Northern Territory. Music was used to teach the indigenous Mudburra language outside of music class to the tune of "head, shoulders, knees and toes" (p. 23). The song was sung in both English and Mudburra to help reinforce the indigenous language. Integral to the success of this lesson was the teacher being supported by relatives and a village elder (p. 23).

Marsh (2011) noted that the lesson she observed was strictly oral/aural, but did not state whether or not the song was written into a kind of primer for the children. In the case of Tyva, I have observed the frequent use of a children's primer by Sundui (2003). Uluschu Uzhurlar (Traditions of the People) is meant for children in year one and two (age 6 and 7) to learn not only about culture but also Tyvan language. The book is fully in the Tyvan language and contains several age appropriate songs, notated for teachers, and full of delightful pictures for children to learn about Tyvan culture. During field work in 2018, I was fortunate enough to stay

with the author of this book, who was my "host mom" while in Kyzyl. Galina used her book to help with my learning of the Tyvan language.

Postcolonialism

Examination and analysis through the Postcolonial lens of data collected in the field and by survey is important to understanding Tyva and Tyvan identity in the 21st century. Tyva, as noted in the history of Tyva section of this chapter, has been part of several empires including the political and cultural subjugation of the Soviet Union and continued cultural repression in Mr. Putin's Russian Federation.

Colonialism has lasting impacts on the economics, political structures, religion and social aspects of life on colonized peoples across the globe (Agawu, 2003). How did colonialism effect the musical traditions of indigenous peoples? While researching the effects of colonialism on music in Africa, Agawu (2003) posits the most obvious influence is the introduction of foreign instruments (Agawu, 2003, p. 42). With new instruments came new performing venues including police, military, church and entertainment industries (Agawu, 2003, p. 42). While foreign instruments had a major impact on African music, Agawu (2003) believes the longest lasting effect was the change in musical language and western tonal harmony (p. 43).

Exploring Tyva through the postcolonial lens, it obvious to see similar effects that Agawu (2003) discussed in his book on African Music. Tyva has a government sponsored wind band that regularly performs popular anthems whilst mounted on horseback. The Soviets also introduced folk orchestras throughout the former Soviet Union where folk instruments sat in sections and played from notated sheet music in the same fashion as their western counterparts. Pre-Soviet Tyvan music did not include western style orchestras. Listening and performing music the Tyvan way meant a more horizontal approach to music versus vertical (Levin &

Süzükei, 2006). While this Tyvan way of listening and performing is being revitalized, western music traditions implemented by the Soviets are still dominant in the education and training of musicians.

Ivanova (2019) explores the formation of post-Soviet cultural identity in Siberian indigenous children through the postcolonial lens. Education along with family environment and the society the children live in are the largest contributors to identity development (Ivanova, 2019, p. 72). Education, in particular, may be the largest contributor. While it is positive that cultural/identity development is encouraged in schools, indigenous children today learn their culture as an academic study (Ivanova, 2019, p. 73). Through significant fieldwork in the Sakha Republic, Ivanova (2019) developed and implemented the "The culture of the people of the North" curriculum that is not only taught within the Sakha Republic, but can also be taught throughout the Russian Federation (Ivanova, 2019, p. 69). The theory behind the curriculum is to teach indigenous children their culture, how they fit into the modern Russian Federation, and interestingly, aims to teach ethnic Russians about indigenous people as well. This has the potential to curb mistrust issues between indigenous peoples and ethnic Russians including those discussed in Poppe (2008).

Tyva also appears to fit into what Khomyakov (2020) describes as neo-colonialism, with a new set of postcolonial injustices and "enduring dependencies" (Khomyakov, 2020, p. 226) on the former colonial power. Some of these issues Tyva experiences include fiscal dependency on Moscow, and the language learning education policies described earlier in this chapter. The Soviets established a multi-cultural "affirmative action empire" (Khomyakov 2020, p. 248), that included schools. These schools were not for the benefit of non-Russians within the borders of the Soviet Union. Rather these schools served a political attempt for the hearts and minds of

subjugated peoples, and also to deflect accusations of colonial empire building on the part of the Soviets (Khomyakov 2020, p. 248).

In many of the former Soviet states and autonomous republics, the Soviet model of education is still in place. The Soviet Union allowed music education scholars to observe their education system, and reports were published in 1959 and 1967 peer reviewed journals. In the Soviet schools, there was little flexibility within the curriculum as it was assumed that all students learned in the same way at the same pace. While this has been disproven today, modern schools in the Russian Federation are still highly inflexible and make unrealistic assumptions about learning pace of students. Soviet music education, in the first four years of education, was done primarily by the classroom teacher and not a specialized music educator. Students were taught sight singing, notation, harmony and rhythm, usually by rote (Lowe & Pryor, 1959). Part of the training pre-service teachers went through were the rudiments of music to teach the youngest children their music lessons. It was required that students entering pre-service teacher training programs to demonstrate musical ability as part of their future jobs would be the weekly 45 minute music classes in the lower grades (Schwadron, 1967, p. 90)

Children in years five through 10 had the option of taking chorus and each school was supposed to have a band and orchestra, but Lowe and Pryor (1959) found this was not always the case. In Soviet education there were official policies, but whether or not they were implemented outside of the schools for students of elite members of the communist party, is up for debate. Past the tenth year of education, students could attend a special music school to study singing, western or even folk instruments before being selected for entrance to elite conservatories in Moscow and Leningrad (Lowe and Pryor, 1959). In addition to regular schools, the Soviets also established special music boarding schools for orphans. In the case of these schools, orphaned

students were handpicked based on perceived musical talent and spent years one through ten (age seven to seventeen) being trained in music (Lowe and Pryor, 1959).

Music education in the Soviet Union was also an ideological tool. Once Stalin wiped out illiteracy in 1934 (at least on official Soviet documents), music and music education were used for propaganda purposes (Schwadron, 1967). Schwadron (1967) also observed that the Soviets had extra-curricular music clubs, not unlike after school music clubs in the United States at the time. The Soviet music clubs were both choral and instrumental. While funded by the local education ministries, they were supervised directly by local trade unions or factories. Repertoire performed *informally* by these clubs were patriotic or nationalistic songs. The sheet music and other materials were published and provided by local "Central Houses for the Arts Education of Children" (Schwadron 1967, p. 89). While the training and music education curriculum provided to children in the Soviet Union, as well as pre-service teacher training, were first rate, music education was not provided for the sake of music, but rather to serve as a political tool.

The most current research, in the English language, concerning music education in the Russian Federation was published in 2019 by Dr. Alena Holmes. In her article, Holmes (2019) discussed education reforms in Post-Soviet Russia. A significant Post-Soviet reform is the push for students to be, "more inquisitive and questioning in their approach to learning" (p. 306). Education in Russia has suffered several setbacks due to a myriad of issues including financial, regional versus national interest, and what the educational requirements should be within the Russian Federation (Holmes, 2019, p. 305). A Tyvan consultant, informed me that many indigenous peoples in the Russian Federation believe that some form of, "sociocultural or intercultural competence" (Belek, 2021) should be part of the regular scholastic curriculum, but currently is not part of the curriculum, nor probably will it ever be.

In the post-Soviet era music education is part of the core education curriculum. Holmes (2019) outlines the new music curriculum:

> "According to the new standards, music is part of core curriculum in grades 1–9 (ages 6–14) and part of elective curriculum in grades 10–11 (ages 15–17). The new standards outline six main objective of music lessons: (1) development of foundation of musical culture of pupils, fostering the love of music; (2) development of music aptitude and critical and creative thinking; (3) development of enthusiasm toward music-making activities; (4) development of creative abilities in different genres of music and integration of music with different subjects including theater, cinema, literature, and art; (5) development of "musical taste" and understanding; and (6) acquisition of music literacy" (p. 307).

There is no mention in the article as to whether or not these reforms pertain to Western Art Music or can be applied to culturally relevant folk music, in the case of the Tyvans. Standard number one, "development of foundation of musical culture of pupils, fostering the love of music" (Holmes, 2019, p. 306), infers that the musical culture of the pupils, is the dominant Russian culture and how western masterpieces compare to Russian music as a means of strengthening national culture (p. 314).

Synthesis of the Related Literature

Apart from discussions with academics or individuals interested in Siberian indigenous musical cultures, I find myself explaining Tyva, her people, and her land to bewildered strangers. Even on the most ubiquitous mapping service on earth, Google Maps, the Republic of Tyva is not labeled, and rather the mapping software drops a "pin" on Kyzyl. Much of the same is happening internally in Russia, with most indigenous republic borders and names being removed from official maps and government issued passports. Tannu-Tyva can be found on maps produced between roughly 1922-1944. Naturally I managed to come across an old globe from that time period that shows Tannu-Tyva as a real place.

While in Russia and at home, I have talked to Russian citizens who have never heard of Tyva and are in disbelief that such a place exists within the Russian Federation. While conducting field work in 2019 in Mongolia, the Mongolian people were far more familiar with Tyva, and instead bewildered that I had spent the previous two summers in and around Kyzyl. The introduction to Tyva, in the first paragraphs of this chapter is crucial for the reader to understand the geographic location of Tyva, the history of the land and contemporary socio-cultural issues the Tyvan people face daily. Most notably is the erasure of Tyvan borders on maps and the limits put on education in indigenous language which results in a forced bilingualism (Poppe, 2008) Potentially more damaging a subtractive bilingualism (Chevalier, 2010) that results in loss of indigenous language in favor of a dominant national language, in this case Russian. Tyva and her people remain in a colonized state subject to the neo-Post Soviet Russification policies as outlined in this chapter.

In addition to published studies examining Tyvan-Russian relations, Russification, colonialism, and education policies, my own field work, as described in the auto-ethnography in Chapter Four of this study, affirms current published work. The Tyvan capital, Kyzyl, at least a few major arterial streets, is a "Potemkin Village." Imagine for tourists and connected citizens Park Ave, Madison Ave and Fifth Ave in New York City being well maintained, but the moment you step on to Lexington Ave or Sixth Ave none of the streets are paved, no sewers, an electric grid haphazardly thrown together with no transformers and aggressive stray animals everywhere. The reality is that the majority of Tyvans live in abject poverty and have a much lower life expectancy than white Russians. The Tyvan republic also has nearly the lowest level of economic development in the Russian Federation and leads in violent crime. Much of this

hopelessness and economic depression, I believe, can be traced to continued efforts to strip the Tyvan people of their identity.

Understanding modern Tyvan identity and what markers the Tyvan people use to manifest what it means to be Tyvan in the modern world was important for not only the literature review, but also for forming initial survey questions that are presented in the following chapters. Mongush (2006) highlights several factors that contribute to modern Tyvan identity including music, language, religion, art, geography and pre-Soviet nomadic life. In a more recent study, Tuvan vocal music is seen as an embodied form of memory that is attached to pre-Soviet nomadic life (Beahrs, 2014). From these two studies, and reaffirmed by my own field work, it is apparent that folk music is a major marker and aspect of modern Tyvan identity.

A major goal in this dissertation has been to fill the gap in the literature that specifically addresses teaching and learning of Tyvan Vocal Music and Tyvan Instrumental Music. Süzükei (2017) discusses that western style conservatory learning is not conducive to folk song education in Tyva. However, this is the extant of the current research on teaching and learning of folk song in Tyva. Contemporary and historic literature exploring music education in the Soviet Union and Russian Federation describe a western conservatory methodology (Edmunds, 2004; Holmes, 2019; Lowe & Pryor, 1959; Schwadron, 1967). My own contribution then will come from field work and survey data exploring how Tyvan musicians learned their music, how they teach their music, and why they choose to teach their music.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Research Design

The design of this study will include an autoethnography based on field work conducted in the Republic of Tyva and Mongolia between 2017 and 2019, a four-point Likert-Scale for participants to rate important aspects of cultural identity in Tyva and finally a long form questionnaire. The long form questionnaire was voluntary and solicited as the final question on the Likert scale. Initially, my intention was to conduct video interviews, a long form questionnaire was adopted as the most realistic and effective way to collect data due to the ongoing Sars-Cov-2 global pandemic. The Likert-Scale questions as well as interview questions were developed based on existing literature (Beahrs, 2014; Mongush, 2006; Schippers, 2010). Specifically, the 22 question long form questionnaire was adapted from interview questions recommended by Schippers (2010, pp. 173-174) for those new to field work and the interview process.

The Likert Scale and long form questionnaire was created using Qualtrics software, translated into Russian by myself, and checked by a colleague in Tyva for any potential translation issues. The Likert Scale was distributed to interested parties, and while the sample was non-random, with help and support of the Tyvan Cultural Center (TCC) and International Khoomei Academy, the appropriate audience of musicians and teachers of Tyvan music was reached. The Tyvan Cultural Center is located at number 7 Ulitsa Lenina (Lenin Street) in Kyzyl, Tyva and currently the Khoomei Academy is housed on the third floor of the TCC. Qualitative

data were collected via the long form questionnaire in the Russian language and was distributed, again, with help and support of both the Tyvan Cultural Center and International Khoomei Academy.

Descriptive data were analyzed with basic descriptive statistics using IBM SPSS, while qualitative data was translated, interpreted and analyzed by myself using descriptive coding. The majority of data was presented with grounded techniques. Grounded theory enabled me to construct theory from data collected (Charmaz, 2014) from participants through two surveys. This methodology further allowed participants to share what was important for them to tell me, while minimizing any potential inherent favorable bias I have towards Tyva and the Tyvan culture. In short, grounded techniques allowed for the survey participants' voices to be in the forefront. A minority of data from both surveys was presented through the postcolonial theoretical lens, when appropriate.

Postcolonial theory allowed a look at survey data through the indigenous experiences and history of the Tyvan people as a colonized people by the former Soviet Union and current Russian Federation (McCollum & Hebert, 2014). In Russia, historically and today, it is not wise to give honest opinions that are unfavorable towards the Russian government and Mr. Putin. For safety precautions, political opinions expressed in the analysis are my own and do not represent the sentiments of the people who chose to volunteer as participants in this study.

Location and Participants

The investigation took place in multiple locations. Field work was conducted in 2017 and 2018 in Kyzyl, Tyva, primarily at the Tyvan Cultural Center. In order to differentiate Tyvan music from its southern neighbor, Mongolia, in 2019 I conducted field work in and around Ulaanbaatar, Övörkhangai Aimag, Kharkhorin, Altan Ovoo and Tsetserleg. This listening and

learning was essential to the process of this dissertation due to regional issues on musical ownership and cultural appropriation. In both 2020 and 2021 I had intended on conducting interviews in person in Kyzyl, but the ongoing Sars-Cov-2 global pandemic made foreign travel largely impossible. To that end, the interviews were converted to a voluntary long form questionnaire with Qualtrics software. Data were held securely online through Qualtrics and on my password protected personal computer. Finally, if participants in the long form questionnaire wish to remain anonymous in future publications, I will create pseudonyms for those participants.

Procedure

Field work was the first major component in this project and was described in an autoethnography. Mackinlay (2015) describes her own educational research autoethnographic writing as the stories told in autoethnography are embodied with the author's own, "emotion, empathy and experiences" (Mackinlay, 2015, p. 1454). Autoethnography is not self-contained to educational research. In the ethnomusicology field, Bartleet and Ellis (2010) see autoethnography as an important hybrid of ethnographic field work and creativity experienced in the performing arts. Over the course of this project, I have found autoethnography to be a deeply personal accounting of my time in the field. In the case of my own writing and research, there is simply no way that I could have properly analyzed and described subsequent survey data without first completing field work, and second completing the autoethnographic chapter in this dissertation. Evenings in the field, both in Tyva and Mongolia, were spent with friends around a fire telling stories and sharing songs. The autoethnographic recounting of my field work was essential for this project, but also culturally, dare I say, *authentic*.

Three consecutive summers were spent in the field. The summers of 2017 and 2018 were spent in the Republic of Tyva, largely in the greater Kyzyl area. The time was used to study Tyvan vocal and instrumental music, learn the Tyvan language and make sufficient contacts to ensure that the study could be done correctly. The summer of 2019 was spent in Mongolia to first teach music for a week in an orphanage in Ulaanbaatar and then several weeks were spent crossing Mongolia between Ulaanbaatar and Tsetserleg to better understand and differentiate Tyvan and Mongolian vocal and instrumental music.

Once the Likert-Scale survey was approved, it was transmitted electronically via Qualtrics to my consultants at the Tyvan Cultural Center. They then distributed the survey to their general contacts distribution list. I had no direct input on distribution due to the contact list being kept by the TCC. The final question on the initial Qualtrics survey was to inquire if the participant would like to complete the long form questionnaire for the purposes of this study and provide an email address for distribution purposes.

The three major components of this study include autoethnography, descriptive survey data and qualitative survey data found respectively in Chapters Four, Five and Six. The autoethnography of my time in the field was presented first in this study in order to set the location and tell the story, through my eyes, of what I saw and experienced in both Tyva and Mongolia. In Chapter Five, Modern Tyvan identity was explored via a short survey containing a four point Likert Scale to rank aspects of Modern Tyvan identity that existed in the literature (Beahrs, 2014; Mongush, 2006; Mongush, 2019), but had not been ranked for importance by ethnic Tyvans until this study.

Chapter Six then presented and discussed integrated results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018) of the twenty-two question long form survey, coded using descriptive coding techniques

(Saldaña, 2021) as well as anecdotes from the autoethnography. Using all three of these sources (autoethnography, descrptive survey data and qualitative data) allowed for data triangulation to form valid insights into of the role of music in both Modern Tyvan identity and the transmission of folksong in the Center of Asia. Finally, in Chapter Seven a new grounded theory of the role of music in Tyva was presented alongside concluding thoughts on this project.

Chapter 4

Autoethnography of Field Work

August 2017

Initial field work was completed in August 2017. I was in Tyva for two weeks for the purpose of seeing the Republic for the first time, visiting my main teachers and consultants at that point – the Alash Ensemble – and to make a decision about whether or not a dissertation study in music education focused on Tyva would be feasible. In addition to exploring the feasibility of the study, there was a large khöömei festival "Xöömei in the Center of Asia 2017 Dedicated to the Memory of Kongar-ool Ondar" that took place in Kyzyl from August 14-17, 2017. Illustration 2 is a detailed map of the greater Kyzyl area where field work took place.

Illustration 2

Map of Greater Kyzyl

Getting to Tyva, in general, is not easy. I chose a slightly less expensive air ticket, that I regretted almost immediately. The quickest way to Tyva is on Aeroflot direct to Moscow-Sheremetyevo airport, a second direct flight to Abakan, Khakassia and finally a seven hour car ride on the south bound M54 highway that connects the Republic of Tyva with the rest of the Russian Federation. If all goes according to plan, door to door this route is about 33 hours from my home in New York. Instead of this route, I chose a ticket that was $150 cheaper that took me from my home in New York City (JFK) to Dusseldorf, Germany then transfered to a local Russian carrier S7 to Domodedovo Airport and finally to Abakan. As it turned out United Air and S7 computer systems are incompatible and while my boarding pass to Moscow was located, the ensuing chaos at 9:00PM in Domodedovo airport proved too much for the outdated computer systems.

I missed my flight and was stranded in Moscow. There is often a feeling of helplessness being in a country where you do not speak the language, but I cannot begin to explain how it felt to be stranded in Moscow and unable to read the alphabet, let alone speak the language. Fortunately, I was able to find a lone ticket clerk who spoke German, and tried my best to explain the situation. After being rebooked on the same flight for the following evening it was a mile walk from the terminal, across a parking lot and through a forest to the hotel that I was put in for the night. Very few positive stories come out in the news about Russia as our respective media agencies and governments do not get along, but the same cannot be said for the Russian people and as I would soon discover, Tyvan people.

The next morning, the woman at the concierge desk arranged to take me to the Kremlin and Red Square for a tour – in her own car with her brother driving. Taxis, apparently, were tremendously expensive, and after hearing my story of being stranded she wanted me to have a

positive experience in Russia. This echoed the sentiment of a security guard outside Lenin's tomb who showed me photos of his recent family trip to Disney World in Orlando, Florida. The message I continually received was to, "tell Americans we not so bad here." After a day in Red Square it was back to the hotel for a shower, meal and overnight flight to Abakan.

The south bound M54 between Abakan and Kyzyl is not for the faint of heart. When I landed in Abakan, a day late, it was chilly and rainy. Due to the festival happening in Tyva in a few days, there were plenty of taxis heading south and I found myself in a Toyota mini-van with an Inner Mongolian singer/music professor and a Han Chinese film crew to document his performances. The road itself is full of potholes and missing sections of pavement, due in part to the extreme climate in Siberia. After three hours, we arrived in Tanzibey, a road side truck stop with a few restaurants run by Tyvans including Café Janet. After a walk in the rain across the 2x4s to a hole in the ground for the toilet, I enjoyed a meal of manchy (Tyvan dumplings stuffed with sheep) and stocked up on waters for the final push. Eventually the road passed through an immense avalanche tunnel cut through the Sayan Mountains and coming out the other side of the tunnel there is a sign with the emblem of the Republic of Tyva. The driver honked the horn, whipped off the seatbelt and put the gas pedal to the floor. About 2:30PM we reached the Tyvan Cultural Center (TCC), located at 7 Ulitsa Lenina, in Kyzyl.

After listening to Tyvan music and seeing photos for nineteen years, I was dropped off in front of the TCC with my duffel bag and banjo. The feeling was honestly quite anti-climactic, and there was a moment of, "Ok, I'm here, now what?" Just a few years earlier I was teaching elementary school band in Charlotte, North Carolina and now I was in Tyva to conduct field work. Of course prior to arrival I had read *Shadows in the Field* (Cooley & Barz, 2008) as well as the "red book" (Nettl, 2015), but really had no idea what I was doing. In a flash, I was greeted

by my close friend, Sean Quirk, who moved to Tyva from Milwaukee in 2003, and was ushered into the director's office at the TCC.

Igor Koshkendey is a titan of Tyvan music, member of the esteemed folk ensemble Chirgilchin and director of the TCC. At slightly just over six feet, Igor is taller than most Tyvan men. Behind his stoic personality and welcoming smile, there is an intensity in his eyes that I believe comes from growing up in Aryskan on the edge of the vast Siberian Taiga as well as the responsibility he feels in executing his job – the preservation, continuity, and growth of Tyvan culture. His desk was flanked by photos of Vladimir Putin, Sergei Shoigu (Russian Defense Minister and ethnic Tyvan) and Sholban Kara-ool (then head of government in Tyva). An assistant served us traditional Tyvan salted milk tea (syttyg shai сүттүг шай) and a hard dairy candy all while Mr. Putin glared at me over Igor's right shoulder. We talked a little about the fact that I would be writing a dissertation about Tyvan music as well as his experience learning from the late Kongar-ool Ondar. An official photograph was taken for the upcoming festival and it was time to say goodbye. Colleagues were waiting and it was time to see Kyzyl.

After a walk around town including stops at Coffee Man for a jolt of caffeine, the Center of Asia monument (and putting my hands in the Yenisei) and finally Arat Square to see the massive prayer wheel, I headed back to the TCC thinking it was time to head to my accommodation for the night – but this was not the case. The summer Naadym (наадым) festival was still in full swing, and in the hills outside of Kyzyl the Tyvan National Orchestra (TNO) was supposedly having a concert, so we left Kyzyl by van for the steppe. Naadym, loosely, is a summer festival that includes horse racing, khuresh wrestling, archery and various agrarian displays. To our delight, the reindeer herders came in from Tozhu. I'm not sure who was more excited, us seeing the reindeer and Chuum [teepee like home the Tozhu Tyvans live in] or the

herders who invited us into their chum. I was urged to demonstrate my limited khöömei (the medium style of singing), but was embraced. Illustration 2 is a photo of traditional yurts and horse post (baglaash) on the occasion of Naadym.

Illustration 3

Baglaash and yurts at Naadym 2017

After a few hours had passed and a herculian amount of manchy, a dumpling stuffed with ground sheep, and shai consumed, it was clear the TNO would not be coming (for reasons I never figured out), but I located a guitar and decided to do some entertaining and song trading. I played and sang the bluegrass standard “The Old Home Place” and Johnny Cash tune “Folsom Prison Blues” as the sun went down. The Tozhu Tyvans shared a few traditional songs in the Tozhu dialect of Tyvan. The sunsets on the steppe are so inspiring. The last rays of the sunlight beat down on the grass and give off a golden glow. As the wind picked up, a Tyvan friend told me to close my eyes and listen to the wind, not hear it, but really listen. For the first time I understood what khöömei (the medium style of singing) needed to sound like. I had taught the concept for a long time thinking that I understood khöömei, but you truly must hear the evening winds on the steppe to understand what the music is evoking. I began to well up in tears – something that would happen several times during this first trip into the Center of Asia.

After visiting a few more Tyvan families and having more manchy (манчы), and of course syttyg shai (milk tea), it was time to head home to our accommodation for the night. Before heading to bed, I had a good FaceTime call with my wife, sprayed myself down with the same deet I had used in Kenya a year earlier and collapsed in the bed. I felt safe, but of course missed my family at home on the other side of Earth. Between the trips through Central Asia, Africa and Inner-Asia, the video calls home have become maybe the most important activity for me. I remember looking at the stars through the window, listening to the wind and the sounds of the neighborhood feral dogs barking. My final thought was something like, "what have I gotten myself into?!"

Kyzyl is the capital of the Republic of Tyva and with a population of 113,000 is by far the largest city in Tyva. To the north are hills as well as Mt. Dogee (Дөгээ), a sacred spot and home of the largest Buddhist Om Mani Padme Hum mantra carved into the rock on earth. Since my first round of field work in 2017, I have developed a small routine upon arriving. I'll get dropped at my hotel, located just east of the Center of Asia monument, have a shower then head over to the monument. The Bii-Xem and Kaa-Xem rivers meet directly behind the monument to form the Ylyg Xem. It has become important to put my hands in the river and drink a small drink of water from the Ylyg Xem – it is clean enough to do this, and Tyva becomes part of me at that point. From there, I know that I have truly arrived and am ready for whatever comes next. Illustration 4 is the Center of Asia Monument. Illustration 5 shows Dogee Mountain and the "Om Mani Padme Hum" mantra.

Illustration 4

Center of Asia Monument

Illustration 5

Dogee Mountain

The city itself is not terribly old, built in 1914, the architecture is decidedly Soviet. There are Stalinist stucco and mortar style buildings as well as the more utilitarian grey Khrushchev standardized buildings. Large murals adorn buildings with Soviet propaganda images of Yuri Gagarin, the Great Patriotic War and modern figures including Sergei Shoigu (minister of defense, chief of the army and half Tyvan). Arat Square, home of the National Theatre and central prayer wheel also has the obligatory statue of Lenin with his right arm reaching out. Like any former Soviet city, you will find all of the important buildings, services and government agencies on Lenin Street, this makes navigation through Russia relatively easy.

When visiting former Soviet cities, you must look at the city through multiple lenses. First there is the superficial. Kyzyl has several lovely parks, a five star hotel located just west of the Center of Asia monument along the southern banks of the Yenisei (Ylyg Xem), a central shopping square, the requisite “I Love Kyzyl” (Я ❤️ Кызыл) sign that every Russian city has, and of

course several restaurants and cafes including my personal favorite Coffee Man near the TCC just past the tank and war memorial.

This is what the government of the Russian Federation wants visitors to see. Keep in mind that I am not critical of the Tyvan and Russian people – this is not a foreign policy or international relations paper. Rarely do the people have a say in anything that goes on government policy wise. There are many aspects of Kyzyl that fit the definition of a *Potemkin Village* - whether or not Girgory Potemkin actually built fake villages to impress Empress Catherine the Great happened, the colloquialism stands. White washing fences and completely covering stalled or abandoned construction projects when politicians or foreign visitors come is a regular occurrence. Years ago, an apartment building was started in the Center of Asia park, all that stands is an octagon of rusted out three stories of framed I-beams. On the occasion of the 2017 festival, the beams were covered with giant posters. In 2018 again the beams were covered when a meeting of Central Asian defense ministers occurred in Kyzyl.

When you look up at Dogee (Дөгээ) just north of Kyzyl, there stands an empty pedestal that was meant to be holding a giant golden Buddha. Donations were collected and the money was in place to build the statue, and one day the money was gone. There was nothing anyone could do about it. As of 2021 the Buddha was finally placed on the pedestal. A similar situation occurred prior to the 2017 music festival. The money was in a safe to pay the artist who made the statue of Kongar-ool Ondar that sits outside of the TCC, and one day when everyone came to work, the money was no longer in the safe. There was only one person who had the combination and keys to the safe, and again there was nothing anyone could do about it. Of course, there are only whispers due to the real danger in exposing government corruption in Russia.

To the condition of Kyzyl itself, a simple Google Maps search reveals that beyond the center of the city the pavement ends, and the gravel/dirt roads begin. Decent suspension is essential and even better if a lift kit can be improvised. As a side note, road conditions are similar in Mongolia, and I was shocked to see not only that the most common car on the road is the Toyota Prius, but the Mongols all have at least a six inch lift kit on their Prius'. Obviously, there are no storm drains, so the roads both paved and unpaved flood equally whenever it rains. It is hard to understand why the Soviets did not include these drains in the urban planning – probably due to Tyva being so far separated from Moscow. Instead, the minute it rains, giant Soviet era vacuum trucks are dispatched throughout Kyzyl, vacuum up the water and dispose of it at a water treatment plant outside of town. Given the close relationship that the Tyvan people have with the natural world, it is good to know that the mighty Yenisei is not being polluted by the runoff. I cannot imagine how Americans would react if the infrastructure and living conditions here were similar. Let me be clear that I have great affection for Tyva, the Tyvan people and Kyzyl, but I do need to be honest about all aspects of life in Tyva.

The electric grid is in dire need of repair. While the center of Kyzyl has consistent power, the surrounding neighborhoods need transformers. At nighttime there is a constant pulsing of lights when there is too much stress on the grid. In the end, the Tyvan people are strong and resilient. Life can be taxing in Tyva. The average lifespan there is the lowest in the Russian Federation – most men and women do not reach the age of 60. Walking around Kyzyl, people are friendly, curious about where you are from, how you wound up in Tyva. Even with a significant language barrier a simple smile and hello (Ekii – Экии) followed by a handshake goes so far in making a good impression. Visitors must be careful to only greet someone with Ekii once a day, if you say it again by accident it can cause offence due to the person thinking

that either you had forgotten you had previously met, or you were not paying attention. Usually, you are also asked if you know Sean Quirk, the lone American who has lived in Tyva since 2003.

The Tyvan Cultural Center, located at No. 7 Ulitsa Lenina (7 Lenin Street) is the hub of all things Tyvan music and an easy meeting point for foreigners. Ironically, the TCC is the most Tyvan space in the Republic while being located in the least Tyvan city in the Republic. The primary language spoken is Tyvan, the cafeteria only makes Tyvan food, and all products and services are unique to Tyva. The building itself was the brainchild of the late Kongar-ool Ondar and was completed during his lifetime – though there were significant corners cut in the construction of the building. There are three floors (basement, main and top) and the building has everything you could wish for. The main floor has a security check, cafeteria, gift shop that sells instruments and clothing, administrative offices, and a theatre that sits approximately three hundred people. Coming to Tyva as a guest of the TCC has some perks, namely carte blanche access to the building and not being hassled by security. Upstairs there are conference rooms used for various classes. As of July 2021, the new International Khoomei Academy is housed on the third floor. The basement, as I would discover, at least in 2017, is where the real action happens.

Alash, Tyva Kyzy, Huun Huur Tu and the Tyva Ensemble all have offices downstairs and there is also a massive rehearsal room that gets used by the Tyvan National Orchestra and other ensembles that require a large space. More importantly, for whatever reason, the Wi-Fi signal there is the strongest in the building. All of the foreigners jokingly referred to the basement in 2017 as “Grand Central Station.” In quieter times, there are several large seven foot grey leather sofas that are a nice place to lay on, make a video call to home, and take a little nap. During one

of these naps in 2018 my friend and colleague, Bailak Mongush, was about to have a rehearsal of her contemporary rock band “Khoomei Beat.” I awoke to her poking me with a drumstick, giggling with her wonderful Tyvan smile. There is no way to describe what I call the “Tyvan Smile” other than to go to Tyva and witness it for yourself.

Nothing goes according to plan in Tyva, and what might be construed by westerners as chaos, happens to be quite normal. In the midst of this comes the most extraordinary happenings – waking up from a nap and your friends are having a rehearsal and want you to come hang out and listen. It might be a “shu-de” and you find yourself in a car with four random Tyvans and wind up going out to a natural water spring and a barbeque or it might be to a friends’ apartment only to watch him paint a wall for three hours. If you can get into the flow of life in Tyva, it really is a beautiful place.

I was introduced to all of this in August of 2017. After a sound night of sleep I woke up, and being a westerner not having had a shower for several days since leaving New York City on the journey to Kyzyl, it was time. I turned on the left nozzle of the shower, and never learned until 2018, that the right nozzle governed hot water. Not wanting to “make a fool of myself the first day in the field” I opted for a very very cold and fast shower. None of the other foreigners were up yet and I was able to have some coffee and a nice conversation with Sean’s wife Sveta. Sveta is wonderfully Tyvan, speaks great English, has a kind heart and as I would learn, incredibly proud of her Republic. She also has that Tyvan smile that I’ve grown to appreciate. We had some coffee and talked about the trip from NYC to Tyva while the other guests woke up and got ready for what would be a huge day. When all were ready, Sveta was kind enough to take us for the 10 minute drive back to the TCC. From there, it was off to see Tolik at Coffee Man and get what would become my standard western meal, an iced americano and the chicken

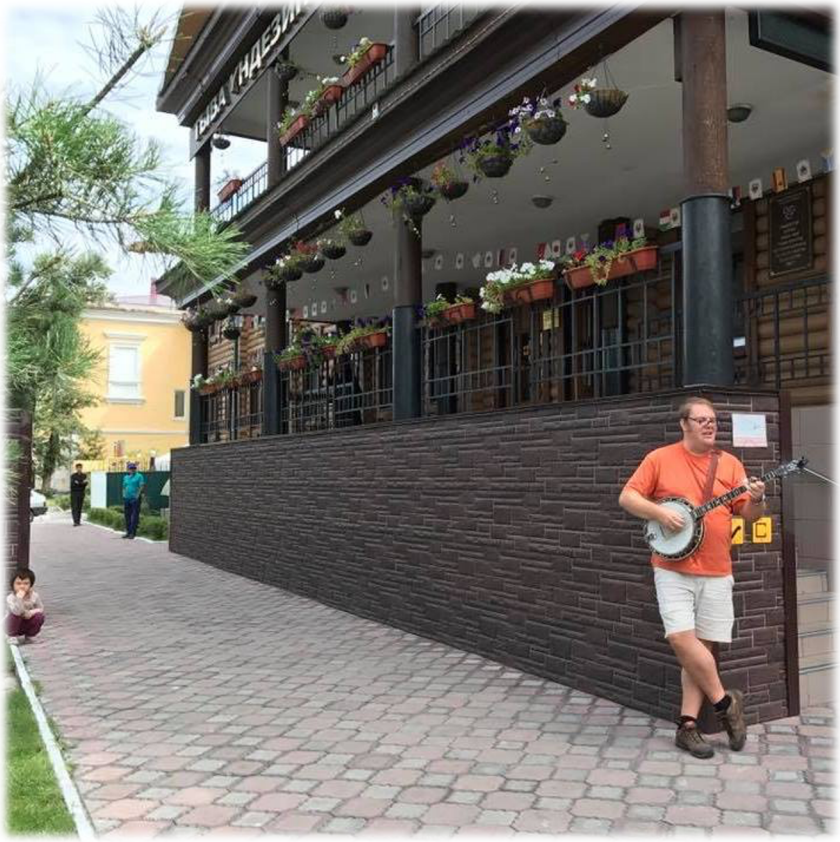
caesar club sandwich. I learned a new vocabulary word that day, ylyg dosh (big ice), which was necessary to get my iced coffee caffeine fix.

More walking through town, saying Ekii to random people on the street and a tour of the National Theatre in Arat Square. The National Theatre is a beautiful concert space with some quirky design features including not a single door frame that is the same size. In fact, one such door was only as tall as my eyebrows, this would prove to be a great photo opportunity with local Tyvan kids hanging out in the theatre. With great delight they all giggled as I had my photo taken walking into the door frame and being unable to pass. After this there was a chorus of requests for "Selfie, Selfie." Little opportunities like this are so important for foreigners to do in a country where images of the White House and Capitol Building are literally photoshopped over scenes of lava and hellfire and broadcasted nightly on the news. It is easy to be critical of the United States and our media, but I really suggest going to a country where there is no freedom of speech, and news organizations are in bed with the government.

We eventually made our way back to the TCC and I took the opportunity to stand out on Lenin Street with my banjo and sing the bluegrass standard "The Old Home Place." I would later learn that I was the first person to ever play bluegrass in Tyva. As I stood there, picked and sang, some people smiled and laughed, others stared in shock at the sight of me and there were general shouts of encouragement in both Tyvan and English – "Eki Eki" (good good) or "Nice Nice Nice." After another visit to Tolik at Coffee Man it was time to prepare for an evening I will never forget, opening ceremonies for 2017 Xöömei in the Center of Asia. Illustration 6 is myself playing banjo outside of the TCC.

Illustration 6

Playing banjo outside the TCC



I had not had a chance yet to say hello to my friends in the Alash Ensemble, and so walking behind the Center of Asia monument where a stage had been set up, it was great to see three familiar faces. Alash is one of the most prominent Tyvan folk ensembles in the post-Soviet era. They are close in age to me and have performed together now for twenty-one years. In the case of Bady Dorzhu Ondar, he has worked as a professional musician since the age of 9, a kind of khöömei *wunderkind* even making an appearance alongside Kongar-ool Ondar on the Chevy Chase Show in the early 1990s. Alash maintains a heavy international touring schedule, more so than any of the prominent Tyvan bands, largely thanks to their manager, Sean Quirk. In so many ways, Alash are major celebrities in Tyva and being friends with them has given me invaluable credibility in Tyva for this project but also near carte blanche access to anything that I might need.

The opening ceremony itself felt like a small Olympic opening. As one of three Americans participating, I was given a front row red velvet seat along with my two friends Michael Cline and Michael Haller. Robert McLaughlin was selected by us to march in the parade holding the США (USA) sign. While the Mongols, Kazakhs, Chinese, Inner-Mongols and other national representatives were in traditional dress and appeared very serious, Robert was wearing a dirty t-shirt and jeans and looked so very confused as to what was going on. The event itself featured welcome speeches from Igor Koshkendey, Andrei Mongush and a surprise speech from Sholban Kara-ool, then head of the Tyvan Government. The real entertainment that night featured select ensembles that would be performing at the festival. Alash, the Tyvan National Orchestra (TNO), the Sayan Ensemble, and Jeff Coffin's Viridian Trio performed at the opening ceremony.

We have lost, in many respects, folk orchestras in America. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s it was common to have banjo orchestras or mandolin orchestras touring the country and performing arrangements of well known melodies as well as originals for the ensemble. In Tyva, and throughout post-Soviet Russia, folk orchestras might be a positive legacy of the former Soviet Union. The Tyvan National Orchestra is comprised of Tyvan instruments including igils, doshpuluurs, chadagans, kengirges, byzaanchys and supplemented with western flutes and percussion. In addition to the instruments, all members also sing khöömei and non-throat singing melodies.

Folk orchestras, including the TNO, have an interesting place in Soviet history and culture. Both Lenin and Stalin both realized the near impossibility of total Russification of a new nation with hundreds of cultures across multiple satellite states. Stalin, of course, was ethnic Georgian and grew up speaking the Georgian language. Lenin's paternal grandmother,

something the Soviet officials hid from the public, was Kalmyk with Central Asian roots (Sebestyen, 2018). Lenin had a clear epicanthic fold in his eyes, and distinctly Central Asian cheek bones. Lenin statues and other propaganda pieces across the former Soviet Union show a very Western European Lenin, which was intentional. Only in Ulan-Ude, the capital of Buryatia and thousands of miles from Moscow along the Mongolian border, is there a Lenin statue that shows his true Central Asian facial features.

Folk orchestras fly in the face of what we believe Russification to be during both Soviet and post-Soviet eras, but according to Edmunds (2004) Soviet authorities under Lenin, and even Stalin, encouraged and supported folk ensembles. These ensembles were regulated and supported by the state, thus these expressions of cultural identity were acceptable in the Soviet Union. The folk orchestras have become an important part of post-Soviet Russia to the point where it is possible to attain the equivalent of Doctor of Music Arts on a number of folk instruments. Folk musicians can largely make a livable salary playing in orchestras and teaching up to the university level.

When the ceremony came to an end, I had no idea where I would be sleeping that night – only that I, along with a few other foreign performers were guests of the TCC and our accommodation was taken care of. It was a nice summer evening after the sun went down and we all walked back to the TCC, about five minutes,. After grabbing my bag and banjo out of the Alash office, I hopped on the TNO bus, which would affectionately become known as the “420 Bus” due to the first three digits on the license plate, and to my surprise the prevalence of cannabis usage in Tyva. Note that I did not take part in consumption due to it being illegal. I got a seat towards the back with my American colleagues, a Norwegian yodeler/khöömei enthusiast

and his film crew. In the front of the bus were Turks, Mongols, Inner-Mongols and Altais. The next 45 minutes would prove to be some of the best music I have ever made and participated in.

The road to the Bii Xem (Бий Хем) tourist yurt camp is paved for a few miles as you head north out of Kyzyl into the Siberian night. Quickly though, the pavement ends and you are on an unlit dirt and gravel road that has several significant bumps that could easily pop a tire or bend an axel if the driver is not careful. Almost immediately when you leave Kyzyl you are in the aal (аал). I understand aal as uninhabited remote land where maybe a single nomad family lives. You can not purchase aal, you just set up your yurt (өг – ög) where other pastoralists are not living and tend to your heard.

Once the bus turned onto the dirt road, the dark bus was a soft murmur of half a dozen languages being spoken and the occasional laugh if we hit a particularly large bump in the road. Bjørn, the Norwegian yodeler, has a warm baritone voice, a love of old cowboy songs and most importantly a Martin LX1 mini-guitar that came with him to Tyva. He asked if I knew any Johnny Cash tunes to which I replied, “Ring of Fire, key of G.” We serenaded our companions in the front of the bus doing our best Cash imitations. While I sang the trumpet interludes, Bjørn improvised a yodel descant. When we finished the front of the bus erupted in cheers and the Mongols treated us to a traditional song, Altai Magtaal (Алтай Магтаал), essentially a song in praise of the Altai Mountains.

As we were all in Tyva for a Tyvan music festival, the entire bus broke into the favorite call and response Tyvan song, “Aa-Shu Dekei-Oo” (Аа-Шуу Декей-Оо). The song deals with riding a horse to visit a pretty girl, common in Tyvan music. The response “Aa-Shu Dekei-Oo” literally means “Aa-Shu Dekei-Oo” – it is just gibberish. What works about this song is that it allows for non-Tyvan speakers and musicians to have a positive and participatory musical

experience with Tyvan music. It is very common for ensembles including Alash, HHT and the TNO to end concerts with this song. I often end my own Tyvan performances with this song and have arranged it for middle school orchestra. As the song reached its final kargyraa solo, the forty some of us broke into an enthusiastic unison kargyraa that rivaled the sound of any diesel engine car that lacked a proper muffler. In my heart, this is why I was in Tyva. After arriving at the camp and stumbling down the dirt trail in the dark to my yurt, all the musicians met again at the kitchen house for a few more hours music making and then to sleep.

For whatever reason, I woke up before virtually the entire camp and decided to jump into the Yenisei and clean off. I did know the camp had a traditional western hot shower and decided to utilize that after my river bath. From here a quick breakfast because the night prior we were advised that we would be leaving for Kyzyl around nine o'clock as it was the first day of the festival. Here again I showed my western tendencies and was ready to go promptly at nine. Big mistake as the bus would not arrive for another hour. On this first visit in Tyva, I quickly learned the concept of "hurry up and wait". Honestly, this lack of sense of time left me agitated most of the time I was in Tyva. Part of this was being so far from home, missing my morning coffee, twelve time zones changed as well as the pressure I put on myself to be "successful" in this first stint of field work. I still do not really know what it means to be successful in field work or even if such a thing can be achieved. Reflecting on all these experiences in Tyva and Mongolia, I know that I learned from the musicians I spent time with and achieved a sense of internal peace with what I was doing and the trajectory of life.

Before heading in to the TCC there was the requisite run to Coffee Man to get our caffeine fix for the morning. Day one of the festival was solely for traditional khöömei and was held in the small theatre at the TCC. Arriving back at the TCC, we found the building buzzing

with action. Unlike so many folk festivals around the United States, the events the TCC put on are free for all to attend. I spent the morning watching and listening to the traditional competition. While the competitors were predominately Tyvan, there were participants from Altai, Mongolia, the USA, China, Japan and Spain. In the audience the Tyvans were quite enamored with the foreign participants, especially the non-Asians, and beamed with pride that foreigners were showing respect to their ancient musical traditions. Highlights were hearing Choduraa Tumat, the first prominent female khöömeizhi, Ayan-ool Sam and several other singers only known by seeing them on YouTube videos or bootleg concert videos on social media websites.

At noon we broke for lunch. Walking out the back side of the TCC towards the Vostorg cafeteria there were two things that struck me immediately: an awful smell and a horse tied up behind the TCC. Next to the horse was a decapitated goat head rotting in the sun. The horse would eventually wind up being a prize for the winner of the singing competition, but I never found out what the severed head was for. At lunch I was also informed that I would be playing a bluegrass song that evening at the Tyvan National Theatre in Arat Square as part of the festival. After a quick meal, it was time to get to business for the evening's performance, but also rehearse with my two American colleagues for the second day of the festival when we would be performing "modern interpretation" of Tyvan folksong.

Back to the basement of the TCC and the Alash office where we had carte blanche access. After ten minutes of rehearsal, we settled on the Tyvan song "Ava Tyvam – Ава Тывам (Mother Tyva)" by People's Khöömeizhi, Andrei Mongush. The range of this song is only a major third from D to F#, and not having known the song prior to coming to Tyva, this melody made the most sense as we had essentially 24 hours to put together a presentable piece of music.

Most commercially available Tyvan music is centered between C and D and we opted for D major.

There is no standard tuning for Tyvan instruments, instead the low string of a doshpuluur or igil should be a note that is comfortable with your voice and the top string should be a fifth above that. D major was relatively comfortable so the igil was tuned D-A and the doshpuluur was tuned D-A-D. As for my banjo, I kept it in standard open G tuning, common for Scruggs style banjo playing, but capoed on the seventh fret and also hooked the 5th string at the seventh fret for an open tuning of aADF#A. Finally, as we were competing/performing in the modern interpretation the decision was made to incorporate lyrics and melodies into “Ava Tyvam” from the American folk song and bluegrass standard “Cripple Creek”. Illustration 7 is a Tyvan doshpuluur.

Illustration 7

Doshpuluur

(Alash, 2022)

A quick coffee, nap in the Alash office and dinner at Vostorg followed the rehearsal and then it was time to head east down Ulitsa Lenina to the National Theatre for a sound check for my solo performance and the first half of the concert. The theatre itself is one of several buildings in Arat Square (Площадь Арата). Arat (Арат) is a Tyvan word that loosely translates to peasant or people, sometimes even a shepherd, therefore the name Arat Square is absolutely recognition to the pastoral nomadic history of the Tyvan people. Within the square there is a large prayer wheel, fountains, and greenspace for people to enjoy. On the northwest corner of Arat Square at the intersection of Ulitsa Lenina and Ulitsa Chuldum is a towering thirty foot tall statue of Lenin. With an ominous look on his face and right hand in the air, the dictator looks over his people. For western visitors in the Russian Federation these Lenin statues, or any vestige of the former Soviet Union, are an oddity from a bygone era that is seared into the collective zeitgeist.

The National Theatre itself, is a Soviet era building that seats approximately 650 (Tuva, 2021) and has a long and important history of productions dating to the period of time when Tyva was nominally independent. Interestingly, the building is not Soviet in design. In fact, the theatre's façade is built in the style of a Buddhist temple, similar to the Tsechenling Khuree, situated just over a kilometer to the east of the National Theatre. The exterior design reflects the early 20th century history of Tyva when it was still a Buddhist state, and more importantly a bold manifestation of Tyvan cultural identity.

After the sound check, I became aware of an issue several performers, including myself, at the festival had. To obtain a travel visa to go to Russia, the traveler must have a letter of invitation. In the case of my letter and other performers' letters, an error occurred, and we had a standard tourist visa, not a cultural visa. Not knowing the intricacies of immigration law in

another country is not an excuse for violation of the law, but that is exactly what had happened. In order to perform, even if you are not being paid, you must have a cultural visa and several of us did not.

The Russian Federal Security Services or FSB (Федеральная служба безопасности Российской Федерации) is the post-Soviet successor to the KGB (Комитет государственной безопасности). Part of the responsibilities of the FSB include border security, including making sure travelers have proper visas for their activities in Russia. Earlier in the day, officials from FSB came to the TCC to check all of the invitation letters and made veiled threats of imprisonment to TCC staff members should there be any visa issues. Luckily, no one was jailed and we found creative solutions going forward to deal with immigration issues.

I enjoyed the first half of the concert and at intermission went backstage to my dressing room to preparing to perform in the second half. I shared a dressing room with the famous Mongolian throat singer Hosoo Dangaa Khosbayar, and as we both speak German, had a fun conversation. Next to us was Jeff Coffin, so I had to stop by and get a picture to send to my undergraduate saxophone professor. It is a tradition I have of sending her some kind of photo from wherever I am on earth. Shortly before going on stage to perform, I was made aware that officials from the FSB were sitting in the audience at the National Theatre checking visas against the list of performers on the program. Of course, I had the wrong visa to be participating in this festival.

Each performer going on stage had to make a short speech about why Tyvan music was important to them and a few other niceties. In my case, I could not thank the TCC and Tyvan people for the invitation to perform without being arrested, so I was advised to give a small speech about my passion for Tyvan music and culture, congratulating the TCC for putting on a

successful event and that I just by chance was visiting Tyva as a tourist at the same time this festival was happening. This was enough to appease the FSB and with my capo on the second fret of my Gibson Mastertone I kicked off the bluegrass standard “The Old Home Place” by the Dillards in the key of A major. Given how close the doshpuluur and banjo are, both being plucked chordophones, it was my hope that the audience would respond well to bluegrass. Within seconds of kicking off the song and playing the JD Crowe intro-break the audience was whooping, cheering and locked into clapping on beat one and three. After walking off stage there were lots of high fives and smiles from new friends in Tyva. More importantly, our host Sean informed me that I was the first person to ever play a bluegrass song live in Tyva. This is an honor I will always carry with me.

I sat in the audience for the second half of the concert and wound up having two fateful conversations. The first occurred when I asked someone sitting a row behind me if she lived in Kyzyl, and was greeted with, “No! I moved to Queens!” There were some great laughs. The second conversation was with my interpreter, whom I had just met that evening. She mentioned that she was a fan of American cinema. She asked whether or not I “liked Quinten Tarantino’s movies.” At that moment, I knew I had made a close friend with Chinchi, whom I count among my dearest friends. That night at Bii-Xem a fire was lit and we chatted for hours about cinema, life in Tyva and life in New York City.

The next morning I woke early, got a shower and took a moment to walk along the Bii Xem, for some quiet reflecting time. I pondered the nature of this festival I found myself inadvertently performing in. Of course in the United States we have all sorts of music festivals and certainly, at least on a subconscious level, people reinforce their own standing in a musical culture, but at best this is a microlevel. In the case of this festival, the entire Republic of Tyva

came together to celebrate and reaffirm an important part of their culture, perhaps the most important part of their culture. Obviously, Tyva is far more homogenous than the United States, but maybe the lesson from all of this would be for the indigenous sovereign states within the United States could find a way to manifest important aspects of their cultures in the same way? At this festival, age and gender did not matter, everyone watched and listened intently. I really understood what Merriam (1967) meant in describing these large festivals as a moment to reaffirm what it meant to be Flathead, or in the case of this festival, Tyvan.

The first half of the day proved to be terribly frustrating. We had to arrive at the National Theatre at 9:30 for a sound check for the afternoon's official contest. We sat in the theatre for nearly four hours and then once we were seated on stage for the sound check, the crew announced they were going on lunch break. Luckily another of our interpreters, Helga, stepped in and loudly explained to the crew that we had been waiting all day and they needed to do their job. I gave Helga the nickname "Helga the Groovin' Tyvan" because she was always on the move and getting stuff fixed. She never took no for an answer.

A final important event happened at the sound check when we were asked what the name of our "band" was. The band had been formed at this point for maybe 24 hours. I had told them about the Swahili word *muzungu* basically meaning "lost white traveler", something I picked up in Kenya in 2016. As a joke, I proposed being called the "Three Lost Americans" (Үш Азар Америктар – Üsh Azar Ameriktar). The name got a good laugh from the Tyvan sound guys and it stuck. More Americans have visited Antarctica than Tyva, so this nod to the rarity of Americans being in Tyva turned out to be a good ice breaker with everyone we met along the way, the joke being was that we must have gotten lost and somehow wound up deep in Siberia.

After a quick sound check, it was time to head over to Vostorg and Coffee Man for a quick lunch and coffee before returning to the National Theatre for the official contest performance.

We were entered in the "modern interpretation" category, where most of the foreigners were. Part of this was because I was playing banjo in the ensemble, but also the "traditional" category was largely for Tyvans and a few foreigners who were singing traditional Tyvan vocal music with Tyvan instruments. When we were introduced, the audience had a good chuckle and were keen to see what we planned to do. While we enjoyed a mutual joke with the audience, all of our performances came from a place of deep respect of Tyvan culture. The performances were all taken seriously and with great deference to our hosts – we were keenly aware of the massive appropriation issues happening with Tyvan music in Mongolia and China and did not want to be lumped into this mess. The reality of performing another culture's music in their country and on the stage of their national theatre laid heavy on my shoulders. There could be no mistakes.

We all gave each other a quick smile and I gave a D and A on my banjo to the ensemble. The performance started with an acapella kargyraa similar to the way Huun Huur Tu opens their concerts. I sang an A2 below the two other members of the band singing a D3. The opening chord was sustained for two tied whole notes at approximately 65 beats per minute. Because the sound mixers understood how to properly live mix Tyvan music, they took the low frequencies and high frequencies up just a bit and combined with the natural acoustics of the theatre there was a thunderous sound that came through. More importantly, the audience immediately started applauding our effort.

The moment was surreal due to several factors including never did I dream I would be in Tyva performing on the stage of the National Theatre, much less fighting a 12-hour jet lag and severe dehydration due to food born illness. Nevertheless, when it was time for me to sing the

words to “Cripple Creek” and end with “Oo vai dembildey” and sygyt, I pushed through much to the delight of the audience. Kongar-ool Ondar often referred to throat singing as “dembildey”, and consequently Tyvan musicians precede their khöömei, sygyt or kargyraa with “oo vai dembildey”. The song culminates with the lyrics, “Tyva chonum ei, Tyva chonum ei – Тыва чонум Эй, Тыва чонум эй!” which loosely translates to “Tyvan people” but in the context of the song it is more of a praise to the Tyvan people. So there we were, three Americans giving thanks and recognition to the Tyvan people. Maybe a little person to person or musical diplomacy can go a long way. Given the precision and quality of the performance, the audience knew that we were sincere and not stealing their culture. We were met again with thunderous applause.

Prior to the evening concert, in the pouring down rain, was the unveiling and dedication of the new Kongar-ool Ondar statue located prominently on the northwest corner of the TCC on Lenin Street. The ceremony was kept short due to the weather, but the crowd did not seem to mind. Sholban Kara-ool was supposedly going to attend, but did not show. Children were in the trees and fences to get a better view, and after a few words and song from Alash, the curtain was pulled back. KO was smiling at all of us, holding his chanzy and wearing traditional clothing. It was also at this time that I discovered the afore mentioned vacuum trucks that were dutifully making their rounds and sucking up the water from the flooded streets of Kyzyl. Illustration 8 is the statue of Kongar-ool Ondar outside the TCC.

Illustration 8

Statue of Kongar-ool Ondar playing the Tyvan chanzy outside of the TCC

In the evening after the statue unveiling was a special concert comprised exclusively of Tyvan musicians and dedicated to KO. The theatre was packed to hear the TNO, Chirgilchin, Alash, Tyva Ensemble and soloists. They were all treated like rock stars by the majority Tyvan audience and foreign guests alike. In the case of TNO, Chirgilchin and the Tyva Ensemble, I only knew them from commercially available recordings and had to travel to Tyva to hear them live. During the intermission, we wound up taking photos and signing programs for people who enjoyed our performance. It was also a time to make a quick call home to New York City. I cannot stress enough when being so far from home, how crucial these calls home were and are for my own sanity. The ability to press a button and have a quality video call or phone

conversation made a huge difference on my psychology. Before departing for camp, we were informed that we would be performing again the following evening in the final concert of the festival. After the concert ended, it was a quick jaunt back to camp and straight to sleep. I was physically ill but mentally on an adrenaline rush.

In the morning, per usual, I was awake before everyone else, had a shower and breakfast in the kitchen. Being up first ensured that I would have a hot shower, which made a world of difference. After breakfast we departed for Aldyn Bulak (Алдын Булак), about 45 miles south west of camp along the Yenisei. As we rode out, honestly, I was quite happy not to be in Kyzyl but rather in the aal, a chance to see some of the natural beauty of Tyva. Aldyn Bulak is a contradiction in and of itself, being both a historic sacred spot and the location of a popular wedding venue and yurt hotel complex. Prior to the new musician's ovaa, the site had been sacred to Buddhists for at least 300 years and to Tengrists for untold millennia. Below the sacred site is a tourist yurt camp complex that is so prohibitively expensive that most average Tyvans cannot afford a meal there or to spend a night. I have no idea who dines and or stays there beyond wealthy Russians and the sporadic foreign tourist that can manage to get a travel visa to visit Tyva.

On the top of the hill, over the Yenisei is an ovaa (оваа) dedicated to music and musicians. In the most rudimentary terms, an ovaa is a small altar in a sacred spot. Sometimes an ovaa can be dedicated to something, like music and musicians in the case of Aldyn Bulak. The ovaa is comprised of a wooden pole in the ground and supported by a massive mound of stone. It is common for travelers to stop at an ovaa and leave a small offering (candy, milk, vodka etc) circle it clockwise three times as well as tie a chalama (чалама) or kadak (кадак) colored silk ribbon to the wooden pole. Many Tyvan musicians tie a kadak to their instruments and on the

second day of the festival, I was presented a with a blue kadak that was meant for my Gibson Mastertone. It has not come off the instrument since. Illustration 9 is the musicians' ovaa at Aldyn Bulak.

Illustration 9

Musicians' Ovaa at Alydn Bulak

The festival participants, however, did not go to the tourist center, instead walking up the hill to the musician's ovaa. While I am sure it was communicated, I was unaware that we would also have a shaman perform a fire ceremony. Once everyone arrived the shaman, Lazo Mongush, spoke to us, via an interpreter, about the fire ceremony and the significance of the fire ceremony. While it was concisely explained, I did not fully understand what I would be witnessing. To better understand and also for the purposes for this dissertation, I had a thirty minute phone interview with hereditary Tyvan shaman Larisa Oorzhak.

It is important first to note that unless you are a shaman, you will never fully understand the meaning and significance of the fire ceremony. Further, the ceremony can only be performed by a hereditary shaman that has been trained by the spirits, as the shaman is the vessel the spirits work through. The fire ceremony is by far the most important ceremony that a shaman performs, and the ceremony is performed for a myriad of reasons including beginnings of a new venture, endings of something important. The most important use of the fire ceremony is for healing and honoring the ancestors. The fire ceremony can be performed for both individuals and groups. As the ceremony begins, the shaman calls upon the spirits of the fire, the most important ancestors as well as the spirits of the earth, sky and fire. Oorzhak informed me that the fire itself becomes a tool that takes your offerings and sends them to the spirits including power animals. In the case of our group ceremony in Aldyn Bulak, the ceremony was used as a general blessing. Prior to the start of the ceremony, we were invisible to the spirits, and only through the help of the shaman were they finally able to see us and bless us (Oorzhak, 2021).

This was the first time I had witnessed a shamanic ceremony in person, to that end, I maintained a respectful silence, and though others began filming immediately, I waited until the shaman invited the participants to document the ceremony. Even at that, I took only a few minutes of video, preferring emic participation in the ceremony. Maybe more traditional ethnomusicologists or anthropologists would prefer an etic observation, however, I was invited to participate and wanted to experience the culture firsthand.

As the shaman prepared the fire and the milk for sacrifice, Alash and members of the TNO performed a Buddhist mantra in deep kargyraa. I took 30 seconds of video but preferred to observe what was happening. At this point, I began to wonder about the relationship between Tengrism and Tibetan Buddhism. The Tyvan’s were first exposed to Tibetan Buddhism during

the 13th and 14th centuries when they absorbed into the Mongolian Empire (Zhukovskaia, 2001). Buddhism quickly assimilated with Tengrism and evolved into a uniquely Tyvan form of Buddhism consisting of a, “philosophical and mystical Buddhism, studied by the higher clergy, the lamas; and a folk Buddhism” (Khomushku, 2017, p. 484) practiced by the people. As the music ended the sound of the jingles from the shaman’s coat, wind, rushing water and birds were shattered by a drone flying low overhead by an Inner-Mongolian (Chinese) professor and film crew. While documentation was invited and allowed, the sound of the drone over the natural world was grossly insensitive to the millennia old tradition.

Before the drumming began, Mongush had to prepare the drum. This was done by sprinkling milk (süt – сүт) from a small bowl (ayak – аяк) with a spoon (tos karak – тос карак) on the skin head of his shaman’s drum (düngür – дүңүр). After rubbing some of the milk into the drum head, he held the skin over the fire, beat the drum a few times and repeated the process until he was satisfied the tone of his drum. Mongush continued the ceremony by moving around the observers, clockwise, while drumming and reciting the words of the ceremony. My limited knowledge of Tyvan did not allow for a total understanding of his words, so instead I allowed myself to fall into the rhythm of his drumming, words, jingles from the shaman’s coat and sounds of nature. This lasted for approximately ten minutes, and when I heard English words, I opened my eyes. We were invited to circle the ovaa, clockwise, three times per tradition. While some people talked, I quietly walked my path trying to understand what we had witnessed. It was not a show for tourists. As we headed back down the hill to our bus, a sense of quiet and peace flowed through me. Even my stomach issues went away. I thanked the spirits at Aldyn Bulak and knew in my heart that the shamans of Tyva, the true hereditary shamans, have a connection with

the ancient land and spirits. Illustration 10 is Shaman Lazo Mongush performing the fire ceremony.

Illustration 10

Shaman Lazo Mongush and the Fire Ceremony

Halfway back to Kyzyl, my peace was shattered when the bus quickly accelerated over the dilapidated roads and seconds later a police vehicle swerved around and stopped the driver. While I have been pulled over by the police in a few countries and time zones, much like being stranded in Moscow, Russia seems like the last place you would want to be involved in a high speed pursuit with the police. However, there I was, an unwitting participant in a high-speed chase that the bus driver lost. The best I can tell is that there were far too many passengers on the bus and the driver opted to quickly go through a roadside checkpoint, hoping the police would

not notice. At the time, though, I had no idea this was the case. What I did know is that I pulled out my passport, visa, letter of invitation and sat very still.

All I could envision was going to Russian prison over an unintentional immigration issue and the high-speed chase on the east bound lanes of the A162 highway. In the end, the officer yelled at the driver and pulled a few Tyvans off the bus and put them into other cars headed to Kyzyl. I shudder to think what may have happened to the driver had the bus not been full of foreigners. It is not uncommon to hear stories of being beaten by local police for the slightest of offences, perceived or real, let alone actively evading arrest. Two new Tyvan friends sensed that I was quite nervous, and we chatted a bit about the visa issues, life in Kyzyl and New York City. One of my new friends was wearing a Yankees hat and I asked her if she was a baseball fan. I was met with a blank stare until I pointed out her hat, she told me that it was in style. Upon returning to Kyzyl, we were told that we would be performing at the final concert that evening, so it was back to the National Theatre for another endless wait and sit before a thirty second sound check.

The wait was two hours, but all was not lost in dressing room 17. I had a chance to pick a few banjo tunes, something that I do frequently to calm my nerves. It must have caused a bit of a stir because after a while a twenty-something Tyvan man walked into our dressing room and asked if he could play my “American doshpuluur”. I loved the name he gave my banjo and the musical analogy. Both the banjo and doshpuluur are plucked chordophones, similar in size and shape as well as tuning. If you use old time double C tuning (gCGCD) on the banjo that easily matches the doshpuluur DAD tuning. With a capo on the second fret, the banjo can quickly be adapted into a quasi-doshpuluur in the right hands. This was the case with the Tyvan man that came into our dressing room, though he kept the banjo tuning in standard gDGBD.

Once he found his way around the fretboard, he began improvising some sygyt. He coughed and laughed saying, “so high!” in reference to the banjo tuning, about a perfect fourth higher than he was used to. Very quickly the most American of instruments (let me here acknowledge the African roots) was comfortably at home in Siberia being played like a doshpuluur accompanying sygyt, khöömei and kargyraa. I asked permission to record and was granted, “okey man!” This was an experience that I was hoping to have in Tyva, a melding of cultures. I had done something similar in 2016 at Moi University in Eldoret, Kenya. I am convinced these little cultural interactions are the way people move forward together in spite of governments antagonizing each other. In the case of dressing room 17, there were only smiles forged over sygyt and banjo. My heart was full of joy, mind racing with dissertation possibilities and intestines growling from residual effects of my meals from the Vostorg.

The evening came. This was the final concert of the festival and we were honored to be on the list of performers for the evening. The local branch of RT was there to broadcast the concert, but we were not aware. We all watched from backstage and enjoyed thoroughly the performances from solists, the TNO, Altai Kai, Alash and Chirgilchin. Particularly, the performance from Altai Kai stood out in my mind with soaring sygyt, aggressive percussion and tempos that rivaled the best of any metal band. Through all of these performances, I kept wondering to myself, “Why in the world are we performing tonight?” It just did not make any sense to me.

Various non-musical awards were being handed out throughout the concert, and a special award was given to my dear friend and colleague in all things Tyva, Michael Cline. Tyva attracts a wide range of people and Michael is no exception. Originally from Trenton, New Jersey, Michael had a traumatic childhood, survived heroin addiction through the 1980s in the East

Village and serious alcoholism into his forties to come out clean on the other side. After coming out of heroin withdrawals that lasted six weeks, he turned on the television in a recovery center and the documentary film “Genghis Blues” was airing. The film details the late blind blues musician Paul Pena and his journey to Tyva in the late 1990s to perform in a khoomei contest. Pena learned the music and language alone via shortwave radio in the 1980s. Cline made the decision on the spot after the film ended that he would stay clean and somehow visit Tyva. Michael also has the uncanny ability to find the positive and good in any human being. To that end, coming out of recovery he struck up a twenty year friendship with Charles Manson, and while in Tyva he and I mailed a postcard to Charlie in prison.

Cline, with an unrivaled enthusiasm for all things Tyvan developed and administers the Facebook group “Tyvan Music – Kargyraa, Xoomei and Sygyt”. With 3800 members and growing, Cline and his group has served as a communication portal for foreigners and Tyvans, both musicians and non-musicians, to connect and share culture worldwide. This includes myself as well. Without the Facebook group, I would not have connected with Cline or Alash and not have found myself performing and learning in Kyzyl. To that end, Cline was made *Ambassador of Tyvan Culture to the United States of America* by the Tyvan government. This award and recognition could not have gone to a more worthy candidate.

Ten minutes later, after an intense performance by Altai Kai, it was time for the Three Lost Americans to perform. We took the stage and the crowd erupted with cheers before we even sat down. Looking back on the video that was broadcast on RT, we three were exuberant and all smiles. With our friends Alash, interpreters, TCC employees and even the composer himself, Andrei Mongush, backstage we hit our acapella power chord in spot on kargyraa and again the audience erupted with applause. I think we momentarily forgot that we had to perform a song

still. We three lost Americans looked at each other and giggled a bit off mic. The performance went well, many cheers and backstage we could see our friends smiling and dancing as we performed. It is interesting, foreign audiences feign austere and closely listen to the overtones produced, while Tyvan audiences smile, sing along and cheer wildly. When the song culminated with a praise to the Tyvan people, we three pointed our hands towards the audience giving thanks – more cheers. We stood to bow, but also raised our instruments parallel to the floor, stretching them outward in a final show of respect and gratitude to our hosts and the spirits. It was greeted with one final thunderous applause. If nothing else happened that evening, we had a great performance, made new friends and felt at home so far away from home.

We were quietly told backstage that we had won an award directly translated as "audience sympathy" but truly meant "audience's favorite performer" of the entire festival. Due to the visa issues, foreigners who won awards would not be presented with them on stage, but apparently the audience knew we had won. After the concert ended and we left the dressing room one last time, we were met in the hallway with journalists who wanted interviews and also concert attendees who wanted a picture and autograph with us. We were the first foreigners to win this "audience sympathy" in twenty years and it was a big deal for a foreign ensemble to win the award. I personally stayed away from the journalists as visions of Russian immigration detention centers danced in my dehydrated head, and instead enjoyed talking to other participants as well as taking pictures and signing autographs.

Upon exiting the theatre, we discovered there was a massive street party with several thousand people going on linked to the festival. More than that, I was mobbed by people looking for handshakes, hugs, kisses, photos and autographs. I gladly obliged and took hundreds of photos with my new Tyvan friends that had warmly accepted me into their culture. It was

absolutely surreal and I thought to myself, “this is my 15 minutes of feeling like a member of the Beatles, you better enjoy it.” After an hour of this, we made our way back to the TCC while the party raged on as DJ Taiga (Тайга - *forest*) spun records and made announcements and exhortations in a sound that was reminiscent of the mid-1970s house parties that DJ Kool Herc was deejaying in the Segwick Avenue housing projects in the Bronx. Between the dehydration, stomach illness, fatigue, and adrenaline there was a strange euphoria, not unlike descriptions of MDMA euphoria, that helped push my legs back down Lenin Street to the TCC.

The theatre in the TCC was setup for the secret awards ceremony along with cakes and small glasses of water on the table. As I was so dehydrated, I took two glasses of the water and shot both back. As the liquid passed my taste buds, something was not right. After swallowing the water my brain processed the liquid as having a taste like the smell of gasoline and a horse barn. There was no burn that one might get from a liquor like vodka, and immediately I thought that I had ingested contaminated water. I quickly found another participant to ask about the liquid, and it turned out to be the local moonshine an employee of the TCC made called araga (арага). Araga is a clear and low percentage by volume alcohol made from fermented horse milk. In the end, I was glad I had it, but it was a shock that created a significant five minute panic. Tyvan friends had a good laugh over this and for the rest of the night thought it was great fun to offer me some “water” from a special arzhaan (аржаан) – arzhaan being a natural water spring in the ground.

The secret ceremony turned into another informal concert with people getting up on stage to play and sing a bit, I have discovered this cross cultural music sharing to be essential in my field work, but more importantly a way to connect with people. When my turn came, I got up on stage with my banjo and dropped my fourth string down a whole step to a C. I made a little

speech, again thanking my hosts for making me feel like Tyva is a second home and played for them the Scruggs banjo classic “Home Sweet Home” calling it Бажыңда Чараш Бажыңда (Bazhyngda Charash Bazhyngda). This translated almost directly to “Home Beautiful Home” in Tyvan, and I believe given the sentiment of my words, it was received well. After more cake, araga, pictures and hugs, it was time to head back to camp in the dark Siberian night. While others stayed up to party, I laid down on my back on the steppe, looked at the Milky Way and called my wife trying to explain what had happened all day and the fact that I had won an award.

In the morning I thought I was being sneaky to beat everyone to the hot showers, but power was out, which meant the water pump was not running – thus no hot shower! Some participants were headed home, so we had another group photo. With a few members of a Canadian folk band, I pulled out my banjo and we played a few pseudo-Celtic renditions of “Salt Creek”, “Cherokee Shuffle” and “Bill Cheatham”. That is the brilliant part about folk music, getting together with people from all walks of life and different parts of the Earth, but sharing a common repertoire, we could break bread musically. I really hesitate to include 2017 politics here, but it goes without saying that certain countries were not thrilled with our 45th President and the abilities to sit and play over common ground absolutely changes hearts and minds.

Upon returning to Kyzyl and the TCC, I tucked my bag and banjo into the Alash office downstairs and boarded the TNO bus. My friends in Alash told me we were going to the lakes, I was so excited not to spend another day in Kyzyl, but really get out and see Tyva and some more aal. Our destination was Чедер Хол (Cheder Khol) and Хадын Хол (Khadyn Khol). While only thirty or so miles south of Kyzyl, the lakes in Tyva are the definition of bucolic. Looking south from the lakes you can see the mighty Tannu-Ola Mountains. The road through the mountains

passes through Samagaltai, Erzin and then then into Mongolia (if you have the proper border visas).

Arriving at Cheder first, there were a few other cars there with families picnicking. We exited the bus and walked to the lake, and I put my hands in and was encouraged to have a small sip of the water. I ingested just a drop or two, and was shocked that the water was salt. Maybe I was being teased, maybe I was not, but culturally, I had another part of Tyva now inside of me. With that, we were rushed back on to the bus and driven to Khadyn, maybe another fifteen minutes due west. Tyva and Tyvans are incredibly proud of their land and beauty of the natural world they live in, so when we arrived at Khadyn they were appalled to find people had left all sorts of garbage on the shores of the lake. As we were taking some photos, our hosts asked us to not capture the garbage. It was a wonderfully Potemkin moment and yes, I obliged and did not photograph the trash. We all took a few trash bags from the TNO bus and made a quick job of cleaning up the land.

Lunch was interestingly Russian and not Tyvan. From the grocery bag the Alash and TNO guys took out bottles of water, pepsi, pickles, crusty bread and of course a favorite since Soviet times and something I had quite a bit of in 1994 on my first visit to Russia, Doctor's Sausage (Докторская колбаса). Doktorskaya Kobasa is similar to bologna in taste, texture and meat mix. First produced in 1936, the Doctor's Sausage is a high calorie, low fat meat that was prescribed by doctors to help fight malnutrition brought on by Stalin's policies (Sorokina, 2018). Circling above our meal were several black eagles and for their trouble were rewarded with chunks of sausage that was thrown into the air for them to catch. After lunch, a member of the TNO pulled out a doshpuluur and again we made music. First was Ezir Kara (Эзир Кара) literally "Black Eagle". We all sang together, the minor version while some provided percussion

on pickle jars and Pepsi bottles. Ezir Kara is a well known Tyvan song with variants in both major and minor tonalities about a race horse, the Black Eagle, and the owner who after winning several horse races at Naadym found herself imprisoned and executed on bogus charges under Stalinist policies in the 1930s. Today in Kyzyl, near the southwest corner of the Center of Asia park, there is a monument, photo and brief story about the horse and owner.

The second song we sang together was “Aa Shu Dekei-Oo” another in what I call the Huun-Huur Tu standard repertoire. One of the first major post-Soviet releases, internationally, of Tyvan music was by the seminal group Huun-Huur Tu. On their album, “60 Horses in My Herd” there are now several standard songs. As described earlier in the chapter from our first bus ride to Bii Xem, this song works on many levels. The most effective is that it is a simple call and response that Tyvan and foreign audiences can equally participate in. The response is simply the title of the song “Aa Shu Dekei-Oo”. Through both songs we sang together it was impressive that when various khoomei, sygyt and kargyraa solos were in the song, everyone improvised their own variant of the quasi-standard version. Illustration 11 shows the shores Khadyn Khol facing south.

Illustration 11

Khadyn Khol

At this point, apparently, it was time to dance. From the cars one of our hosts incited a communal eagle dance (эзир самы – ezir samy) by blaring a slow Tyvan song from his car stereo and yelling to us below, “Video!!!! Dancing!!!!!”. Twenty something men, arms stretched wide with fingertips in the air, gracefully soared like the black eagle along the shore of Khadyn. Somewhere in the ether is the video our friend made which includes my awkward attempts at the traditional dance. When this ended it was back to the food and drink. Our hosts admonished me to take off my boots and walk on the sand. The white substance I mistook for pollution and chemicals were actually naturally occurring minerals that are good for your skin. I snuck away,

boots off, to give my wife a phone call. The sun was beginning to set and I knew that on the other side of the world, the sun was beginning to rise.

Alcoholism is a major social and medical problem in Tyva, and during our time at the lakes I watched the bus driver, who clearly was enjoying the beer. As drinking and especially public intoxication is looked down upon culturally, I opted to not imbibe and apart from the accidental araga, made a point of never drinking any alcohol in Tyva. When I raised the issue of the driver's sobriety, at first I was handed the keys to the bus, as I can drive stick shift. Our hosts made sure the driver was sober, and eventually we made our way back to Kyzyl for another barbeque at Sean's home.

You will never go hungry, as a guest, in Tyva. Upon arriving at Sean's house, the entire bus unloaded and went in. I was a bit alarmed, because earlier in the day I left my clean clothes and banjo in the Alash office at the TCC. I knew my belongings would be perfectly safe, but it was more of the reality that it would be two more days before I had a shower and change of clean clothes. All of that aside, it was a great party and we had the chance to relax and chat with Igor Koshkendey, members of Alash and their wives, Jeff Coffin (Flecktones and Dave Matthews Band) and even Minister of Culture Aldar Tamdyn. After more chicken, lamb and pork we closed our eyes on our last evening in Tyva.

I thought that I had one more night in Kyzyl as my hotel reservation in Abakan was not until the next day and the flight home the following day, but that was shattered quickly when I discovered that the Kyzyl-Abakan taxis all leave about 10:30PM and drive through the night. I was worried about driving through the night as wide swaths of the M54 are not lit and guardrails are not common, but I kept that internal as I did not want to be rude. As I've said, if you can let go of plans, wonderful things happen in Tyva. To this end after having some leftover sheep for

breakfast, Sveta rounded me up in the car and took me to Arzhaan Churek-Dorgun (Аржаан Чурек-Дорген). Churek-Dorgen is fifteen miles or so northeast of Kyzyl in probably the closest aal to the city.

Along the way we picked up some plastic bottles to collect water in. It is hard to describe the feeling of drinking clean water directly from the earth, but you feel invigorated, and a visit to an arzhaan in some aal is essential for Tyvans. The aarzhan also had what we might call primitive camp sites to sleep and cook in, and as it were Sveta had relatives staying there that we would be bringing back to Kyzyl. Within the arzhaan there is a Buddhist stupa adorned with chalama as well as an ovaa for men on a higher hill that was a significant climb. Prior to the climb we took some water to drink, and I was shown to how to give thanks to the earth. The method was to first sprinkle water on your hair, then forehead, mouth and heart before actually having a drink.

Sveta gave me some time to visit the men's ovaa, while she went back to her relatives in the camp area. When she was out of sight, it dawned on me that this was one of the first times I had been truly alone in Tyva. After reaching the ovaa, I sat in the dirt and took in the view looking south to the steppe with lakes, rivers and Tannu-ool mountains. Eventually, I closed my eyes, I wanted to capture the sound in my head of khoomei from the winds and sygyt from the birds one more time before departing Tyva. I opted not to make recordings as I wanted it private for my own practice. Illustration 12 shows the arzhaan at Churek Dorgen.

Illustration 12

Churek Dorgen Arzhaan

After twenty minutes of meditation, I eased my way down to the hill and my host mom Sveta to find that her relatives had whipped up some delicious sheep manchy. So now, to have this freshly slaughtered meat in the water directly from the earth, was a truly Tyvan moment. After a short meal, we loaded up in the van and headed back to Kyzyl. Arriving home, was one of our interpreters, Chinchi, who has since become a dear friend and colleague, along with two of her friends in a late model Soviet Volga automobile. I do not know why I love these vehicles so much, maybe it was riding in them in 1994 with my grandfather in St. Petersburg and the

nostalgia from that. As we had five hours before the drive to Abakan, there was time to go to one more arzhaan, this time it was Kundustug (Кундустуг Аржаан).

Kundustug arzhaan is on the western edge of Kyzyl and takes its name from the Tyvan word Kundus (кундус) which means “beaver”. To that, as you descend the wooden stairs to the aarzhan, you are greeted by several statues of smiling beavers. Once we reached the arzhaan we gave thanks again before drinking the water. In my mind, I was putting more of Tyva into my body. Above the arzhaan is somewhat of a tourist attraction that can be seen as an analogy for the economic issues in Tyva. People visit the monument from 2011 when construction began on the Kyzyl-Kuragino railway that was meant to help connect Tyva to Khakassia and points north. In addition to the plaque commemorating ground being broken, there is roughly one hundred feet of rail track that was laid before the project was delayed for lack of money and still sits abandoned today.

We drove back to Kyzyl as the sun was setting, stopping by the TCC one more time to pick up my bag and banjo before getting back to Sean’s home. We had more leftover meat and manchy and before we knew it, the time had come to leave Tyva. Our other interpreter, Helga, came to wish us a farewell as well. For a safe journey several sprigs of Tyvan artysh (juniper) were lit and the smoke was passed around our bodies clockwise three times as we were wished a *white road* (ak oryk – ак орук) or a safe journey. I had tears giving hugs to new friends. For nearly 19 years I had dreamed of coming to Tyva and now it was time to go. I was not prepared, emotionally, to leave. There was no shame in my heart over my tears. Just as there is excitement, and a healthy dose of fear when you enter the field, it must be counterbalanced with grief and sadness when you leave, the yin and the yang.

July 4, 2018

The Aeroflot A330 touched down in Abakan at 8:30 on a rainy morning. As we taxied, it appeared the old Soviet military aircraft had stayed static since I had left in August 2017. I was arriving in the field three weeks later than anticipated. In retrospect, this should have been delayed a year to allow for complete recovery of a serious medical issue. Eight months earlier, in October 2017 I was out for a walk when I was struck by a woman driving a six thousand pound Chevrolet Suburban. My left patella was fractured and in the ensuing months did not heal correctly which resulted in the meniscus being torn and arthritis developing in the knee joint. Three weeks earlier, on my initial departure date, as I bent down to pack my suitcase, there was a snap in my knee, my entire leg went numb and I collapsed to the ground. This should have been an indicator that I needed to rest, but I had just reached ABD and was determined to get this study done.

After deboarding, I saw my friend Olcha, all smiles and waiting for me to arrive. Remembering the year prior when the gas station attendant refused to sell me water, he handed me a giant bottle as we walked to his van for the seven hour drive down to Kyzyl. As I put my bag in the trunk a twenty something Tyvan girl opened her eyes, pointed at me and said in perfect English, “Damon Postle, lost American banjo player! I follow you on Instagram.” What a great way to start the last leg of the trip. We chatted a bit, then nodded off. Arriving in Tanzibey for lunch, my fellow passengers offered to help me order, however, I graciously requested that they let me practice my Tyvan that I had been working on for eight months. It was a proud moment when I ordered my кылаңнаар суг болгаш манчы (literally “sparkle water and manchy) and was handed a bottle of sparkling water and a moment later out came some delicious

sheep manchy. The cashier was surprised to hear a white westerner speaking her language, but she smiled and appreciated my efforts.

Back on the familiar road south, we passed through the massive avalanche tunnel, and I was back in Tyva. The ride was uneventful minus a herder crossing his cattle across the highway just south of Turan. As I was last to be dropped off, I had an impromptu tour of residential Kyzyl, as one by one the passengers were dropped. Finally, it was my turn and for the first two nights, I opted to treat myself to a stay at Kyzyl's newest, and only, five-star hotel, the Azimut. Located on the Yenisei and abutting the western property line of the Center of Asia park, the Azimut provides a level of convenience and western amenities that cannot be found at any other hotel in Kyzyl. That evening there would be a July 4th barbeque at Sean's home, but in the meantime, I was able to get checked in, showered and had a small nap.

Prior to heading to the July 4th festivities, I rendezvoused with Michael Cline at the hotel. While I waited for him, a Tyvan couple dressed in formal wear approached me. They knew me from the televised concert a year prior and asked me to be in their wedding photos. Amongst the formally and traditionally attired Tyvans, there I was in blue jeans and a brown Patagonia zip down sweater jacket. I could not have been more out of place, but also completely welcomed in their celebration. Finally, a familiar face appeared in the hotel lobby. A thick New Jersey accent echoed through the lobby, "Ekii amigo! How ya' doin' bro?"

After a big hug and a few laughs, we began the arrival ritual. Heading into the Center of Asia park we first went down to the river, put our hands in and had a small drink from the Yenisei. From there it was up to the obelisk to have our photo taken, then out the exit to head back to Arat Square. I turned around at the park gates to look at the obelisk, the colors from the setting sun against the monument were beautiful. We made our way to Arat Square and the

prayer wheel. Finally, we hailed a cab and were on our way to the Kaa-Xem district in eastern Kyzyl.

We arrived and it was great to see Sean, Sveta and family. They made some excellent sheep, chicken and pork barbeque for dinner and we had a great time catching up. Once the sun was down, we cranked up some John Philip Sousa marches and set off fireworks. It was an odd feeling to be celebrating American independence in the dimly lit Siberian night. Eventually the taxi came to pick up Michael for his ride back to the airport in Abakan and I hailed a ride back to the Azimut. Back at the hotel, I was able to get a video chat in with my wife. From there I set the air conditioning on 68F, climbed into the king size bed and proceeded to sleep for a solid ten hours.

There was slight confusion waking up. Combining the twelve-hour time changing and waking up in a five star hotel, I momentarily wondered if my trip had been side delayed and I was in Paris or Rome. I realized where I was, made a call home to wish my wife good sleep, cleaned up and had a solid breakfast. I was in Tyva, alone, and ready to do fieldwork. Headed out down Lenin to the TCC I stopped for a quick coffee and Mokka Coffee, which has sadly since closed a victim to the covid-19 economy. Headphones in my ears, I made the three quarter of a mile walk to the TCC. I felt tremendously confident for the day. As I bound up the stairs, in the front door and through the security, I was greeted by a familiar smile and hug from Andrei Mongush. Given that we had won an award a year earlier playing one of his songs, Ava Tyvam, it was a good sign that he was the first person I saw.

Walking into Igor's office, I was greeted again with a smile and even better a song. Igor pulled out his bayan and sang a powerful Oidupaa style kargyraa. The bayan is in the accordion family (Hornbostel-Sachs 412.132), that lacks piano keys, and instead melodies are played on

three to five rows of buttons in the right hand while the left hand provides harmonic accompaniment. The notes on the buttons are not a diatonic scale as they would be on a piano keyboard accordion, but rather each abutting button is spaced a minor third apart – ex. F#ACEb - (Harrington & Kubik, 2001). It goes without saying that the bayan is not indigenous to Tyva and has a colonial legacy, but the Tyvans have adapted the instrument to fit their own music quite beautifully. The power that came from Igor's voice is unlike anything I have ever heard. Illustration 13 is Oidupaa playing his bayan.

Illustration 13

Oidupaa playing the bayan

(Bogswats, 2019)

Oidupaa style kargyraa is named after Vladimir Oyun Oidupaa (1949-2013). His style of kargyraa can be characterized by the singer performing a kargyraa at the top of their vocal range while providing accompaniment with the bayan. When performed correctly Oidupaa style has almost a feeling of the blues which is further enhanced by the bayan being tuned in minor thirds, or blue notes. Oidupaa, himself, is a controversial figure in Tyvan music. His seminal record "Divine Music From A Jail" (1999) was recorded during one of his prison stints for sexual

assault and kidnapping. Rumors persist that he was jailed for political reasons, but these are baseless. The record is also reminiscent of some of the prison songs that Lead Belly, who played a melodeon (a diatonic button accordion) in addition to twelve-string guitar, recorded post incarceration. The quandary Tyvan musicians face is separating the man from the music, which is not unique. We do it in America with the music of people accused of and/or convicted of serious crimes.

Wanting to reciprocate, I took a chanzy off the wall, checked the tuning and played an old bluegrass murder ballad “Down In The Willow Garden”. The song tells the tale of a man who murdered a woman he was courting and was hung as punishment. With the low D tuning on the chanzy, the song had an exaggerated mournful tone. A few employees of the TCC stopped and listened to Igor and I trade songs. Breaking bread over music, as I have discovered in my travels through Inner and Central Asia, is culturally important, and something I wish we did more in the United States.

After another small chat about my plans, I politely excused myself, knowing that Igor had work to do. In the ensuing years, Igor and his wife Aydysmaa have become dear friends. Both are intensely aware of their role as culture bearers for the Tyvan people, but are not crushed by the weight of their collective responsibility. I wandered upstairs, briefly, to visit the English camp that Sean was teaching. The children exploded with enthusiasm when a giant American walked into the classroom. At the lunch break one of the children asked me in perfect English, “How many languages do you speak Mr. Postle?” She then informed me that she spoke four, and I was quite embarrassed to admit that I at best spoke two at the time. Since that time, my Tyvan and Russian have improved to where I can survive in both Moscow and Kyzyl not having to rely on English or interpreters.

I went downstairs to the orchestra room to see who was downstairs and received a fairly crushing blow to my field work plans. The entire TNO was on holiday, I obviously do not blame them for that, and the teacher I had lined up to take igil lessons from had gone to the aal for several days. I would have to quickly adapt, and while certainly panicked, I did try to keep a positive face. Feeling the jet lag and incredible disappointment, I walked back to the hotel, made contact with my host mom and took a nap.

The evening made for a fortunate chance meeting. Dinner was an event that involved trying to eat while politely taking pictures and having short conversations with random people curious about the American that stumbled into the basement shawarma restaurant. I walked over to Arat Square. I circled with the prayer wheel slowly, still trying to think of how to make the trip beneficial to the study. After the third circle, I went and sat on the stairs of the theatre facing the square. The last time I'd been here, I was being mobbed by fans from the previous year's festival. As I stared across the square pensively, Lenin was staring right back at me with fire in his eyes. What in the world was I going to do with all the prominent musicians having left the Republic for holiday. Out of nowhere, I heard a voice calling my attention. I was headed for a full-fledged meltdown, and really was not in the mood to talk, but I looked up with a gentle smile and said hello. Illustration 14 is Arat Square with the prayer wheel and Tuvan National Theatre

Illustration 14

Arat Square

Bichen Anai-ool has a kind face, an infectious smile, joyous laugh, and an immense intellect to match. This chance encounter turned into meeting one of my closest friends and consultants in Tyva. Over the past several years, I cannot express enough gratitude for the introductions she has made for me, language tutoring and insight. We chatted for the better part of an hour as the sun went down and watched the colors radiate from the prayer wheel in the square. Bichen had worked as an interpreter the year prior and recognized me, but I had not met her in 2017. Bichen, herself, was an economist in Moscow, and researched the potential economic impact of tourism in Tyva. The sense of pride she has and feelings of responsibility for

the economic development of her homeland is quite admirable. We traded phone numbers and set an appointment to meet at Coffee Man the next afternoon with another mutual friend. With that, I headed back to the Azimut. There is a pervasive myth that Kyzyl is incredibly dangerous and not safe to be out past dark, but I have never seen any evidence that would confirm this. My walk was uneventful minus the random hellos to fellow pedestrians.

In the morning, it was time to decamp from the Azimut and move into the apartment with my host mother, Galina. Standing at slightly over five feet tall, she greeted me at the hotel with a big smile and attempted to take my suitcase. I thanked her, but assured her I was capable of handling my own luggage. It was a quick walk west down Lenin Street towards the national museum and the apartment. Galina kept a brisk walk that I struggled to keep up with. Along the way she pointed out Tyvan State University, where she was on faculty. Galina is a linguist that specializes in teaching Tyvan language. This would prove to be quite beneficial.

It is hard to describe what is considered a nice apartment building in Kyzyl without offending, so I shall tread lightly here. For anyone doing field work, regardless of where the field is, living with a family provides so much insight into daily life. The apartment building I lived in with my host family was built, most likely, in the 1960s while Nikita Khrushchev was the Soviet leader. We opened the blue iron door, entered a dark concrete stairwell, and ascended the uneven stairs up several flights. Because pay was government controlled, like everything else in the Soviet Union, there was very little in the way of incentive to have quality control in construction. Friends that grew up in East Germany refer to these Soviet block style apartments as *gut genug* (good enough), as the apartments were good enough for the proletariat. Honestly, if these buildings were in the United States, they would be condemned.

We opened the iron gate, then blue iron door and walked in. First shoes off, then I was shown around. The apartment is a two bedroom, one full bath with laundry and galley kitchen with a sink, refrigerator, microwave and hotplate. There was no oven, which surprised me. In 1994, I stayed in a similar apartment in St. Petersburg on the Nevsky Prospekt that did have an oven. By Tyvan standards, this apartment would be for successful high income earners. After settling in my bedroom, we chatted a bit, which proved to be a good challenge. We did not speak each other's native languages, but as we both spoke German, we conversed in that language and from there she translated German into Tyvan for me to understand. This level of communication was one of the most beneficial aspects of my field work because it forced me to learn a new language from a foreign language. Thinking in English, translating to German and learning the Tyvan required my brain to learn in a way that it previously had not.

Heading down towards my meeting at Coffee Man, and having had the wind taken from my sails due to my teacher being bivouacked in the aal, I was determined to make something happen. I thought of my undergraduate saxophone professor once telling me that if I wanted to see God laugh, make plans. Whoever or whatever God is, surely was having a good laugh as I made my way down Lenin Street. I was still on American time and realized there was time to spare before my meeting, so I popped by the TCC to say hello and inquire about borrowing an igil for my lesson the following week. Getting the instrument secured quickly, I ran upstairs to the English academy to say hello to the children and was asked by the instructors if I would be interested in giving them a lesson about bluegrass and teaching them a song – which of course was an enthusiastic yes.

Something I have always admired about Russia is that people always dress at the business casual level or above, even for an informal meeting with friends. This has extended to Kyzyl,

harmless, but still colonial legacy, and looking at my black t-shirt, shorts and boots it was clear I had committed a faux pas. I made mental note to not do this again. Having arrived early for my meeting, I chatted with the owner, Tolik, briefly, got my drink and took the table in the back right corner under the decorative igil that we call the "seat of honor". Coffee Man had changed their paint scheme to much lighter color, more spring like, since my last visit in 2017. In Kyzyl, this was a great controversy as the consensus was that the new décor was less cozy. Bichen and Chinchi arrived, attired beautifully in silk shirts, flowing skirts, high heels and faces made up. I was embarrassed with my attire.

I had not seen Chinchi in a year and the initial plan of talking about the dissertation had gone out the window. I asked her about her education at TSU, as she was training to be an English teacher. We also chatted about her piano lessons, I was curious if she was playing any Tyvan songs, but it was all the standard two octave scales and western etudes. She asked about my wife and dog back home and how life in New York City was. I did try and converse a bit in Tyvan and my colleagues were gracious enough to oblige. All the while other customers gawked at me, some coming and asking for a photo and others told me they were impressed that I was speaking their native language. As noted in the literature review, Tyvans are essentially coerced into speaking Russian with white Russians because the rate of fluency amongst Russians in the Tyvan language is non-existent (Poppe, 2008), another glaring colonial legacy. In fact, I have come to understand that it is almost viewed as racist for Tyvans to speak Tyvan in front of Russians.

There was a major breakthrough in my understanding of Tyvan. People had been asking what my city (хоорай) was, and trying to my best I consistently replied, "Мээң бажың Нью-Йорк Ситий турар" (Meeng bazhyng New York City). While the vocabulary was correct, the

grammar was not. From my colleagues I learned possession in Tyvan grammar that the correct word for home, showing possession, should be bazhyngym. To show possession in Tyvan, in most cases, adding the ym (ым) to the end of the noun indicates it belongs to you. I could talk about what was most important to me now, my family. That evening I collected my thoughts and watched the sun go down behind Dogee. I looked at the mantra on the side of the hill, om mani padme hum. I did a quick search and contemplated on the fourteenth Dalai Lama of Tibet's words:

> "It is very good to recite the mantra OM MANI PADME HUM, but while you are doing it, you should be thinking on its meaning, for the meaning of the six syllables is great and vast. The first, OM, is composed of three pure letters, A, U, and M. These symbolize the practitioner's impure body, speech, and mind; they also symbolize the pure exalted body, speech and mind of a Buddha" (Gyatso & Lama, 2009)

I told myself that I understood what the Dalai Lama was saying, but I did not. As I fell asleep, I wondered if I would reach any kind of enlightenment during my time in Kyzyl.

The next few days came and went. I was supposed to go to Chagatai, the lake named after one of Chinggis' sons, but plans fell through as apparently the car broke down. Probably better it broke down in Kyzyl then on the road somewhere on the steppe. I acclimated myself as best I could to Tyva, spending time practicing my Tyvan with Galina, teaching at the English Academy at the TCC as well as trying to make some contacts for the interviews that would never happen. I found myself going further into a depression. I was in a cognitive loop wondering what I was going to do. In these days, I did have a wonderfully Tyvan experience. As it turned out, Galina was expecting relatives to come in from the kozhuuns. This presented me with the opportunity to learn another important part of Tyvan culture, Tyvan food.

After a quick trip to the Vostorg, we came back with sheep and beef, plus vegetables in order to make Tyvan dumplings called manchy (манчы). I had never used a meat grinder, but Galina showed the correct mixture of sheep and beef for the manchy. Tyvan meat is probably the best meat I have consumed in my travels. Largely because everything is farm to table, or maybe aal to table fresh. There are no anti-biotics in the meat you buy and because the animals are not mass produced, but rather taken care of by herders. The animal's diet is natural and they have plenty of exercise. I thought to myself that this meal would cost hundreds of dollars in the United States at a restaurant, and frankly having dined at multiple three Michelin starred restaurants in New York City, I have never had any meat as flavorful and delicate as Tyvan meat.

The dough was easy enough to make, flour and boiled water, of course from an arzhaan. After making the mixture of sheep, beef and root vegetables in the grinder, Galina patiently showed me how to roll, stuff and fold the manchy. For every dumpling I completed, Galina probably made five, each immaculately perfect in shape and size. Mine, however, were less than perfect, but the experience of making manchy all day before the relatives came is one of the best moments of Tyvan culture I have experienced.

Luckily, the relatives brought sheep for the izig khan (изиг хан) pre-butchered. The process of preparing and butchering the sheep is not pleasant for westerners. Having witnessed it before, the process essentially is the sheep being held down while someone makes an incision in the belly below the ribcage. At which point the butcher sticks his hand into the incision, reaches up and severs the aorta. The sheep bleeds to death, internally, in a matter of seconds if the job is done correctly. It is disrespectful to the animal for the butchery to last much more than ten seconds. Everything from the animal is used. The pelt obviously is important, as are the offals and blood, used for sausage, as well as the meat. While I do not care for internal organs, blood

sausage or soup from the brain, I never turned the food down, that would have been incredibly rude to the hosts, but also the animal that gave its life.

After all was prepared, we had the long feast that ran into the evening. My head was dizzy from trying to understand the Tyvan being spoken. The accent was much different from the kozhuun the relatives came from. The analogy would almost be a foreigner talking to an American and a person with a thick Glasgow Scottish accent. Both are speaking English, but speech patterns, expressions and accents could not be more diametrically opposed. Around midnight, I had to excuse myself and go to sleep. When I woke in the morning, people were still chatting and eating izig khan. I asked if by going to sleep was a faux pas and was assured that I had done nothing culturally insensitive. Quite the opposite, they were impressed that I ate the offals with gusto, something that whites rarely do.

Finally, time had arrived for my igil (игил) lesson with my teacher (башкы – bashky) at the TCC. The igil can be seen as the de facto national instrument of Tyva much like the celtic harp in Ireland or morin khuur in Mongolia. In 2009, the TCC in conjunction with the Ministry of Culture sponsored the “Year of the Igil”. During the “Year of the Igil” contests were held as well as academic and practical symposiums in order to advance instrument making and preserve the knowledge of elderly master musicians and instrument makers (Quirk, 2021). The igil also has a folkloric origin story that centers around a poor shepherd boy who rescues a foal, raises the animal to be an excellent race horse at naadym only to have the animal killed by an evil Mongolian warlord. After wandering the steppe for many days, the spirit of the horse comes to the boy, tells him where to find the carcass and how to make an instrument from the skin, hair and bones. The boy becomes proficient on the instrument which angers the warlord to the point of having assassins sent to the kill the boy. In the end, the spirit of the horse leads a band of other

spirit horses to save the boy (Oorzhak, 2009). I have two igils in my personal collection of Tyvan instruments, both of which are treasures.

The igil is a two-string bowed chordophone (321.321) with a carved horse head above the tuning pegs and an almost oval shaped bowl at the bottom. The igil is carved out of larch wood and goat skin is stretched over the bowl with a tone hole the size of a quarter cut into it. Some makers, including Aldar Tamdyn, will use a sound post while others, including Mongun-ool Ondar, will not use a sound post. Strings are made either from horse hair (traditional) or tightly wound strands of fishing wire (practical). The bow itself is also larch wood and is curved like the bow for a medieval rebec or Turkish rebab. Igil bows lack a frog and screw, instead, tension of the bow hair is controlled by the middle and ring fingers on the right hand. Illustration 15 is an igil.

Illustration 15

Tyvan igil

(Alash, 2020)

For my lesson, I was able to use the personal instrument of my teacher, which was made by Aldar Tamdyn for the occasion of my teacher's wedding. The oval shaped bowl was ornately carved with adornments in the style of fish scales and painted blue like the ocean. My first part of the lesson was trying to grasp proper seated posture. First lessons tend to be awkward, in my experience, and here in the orchestra room in the basement of the TCC was no exception. I was taking a lesson from the finest igil player in Tyva, maybe in the history of the instrument, on his personal instrument made by the former Minister of Culture.

Sitting clumsily on my plastic chair, I crossed my right ankle over the left and tucked my legs back towards the seat of the chair. At the base of the igil there is a quasi-end pin that is part of the wooden bowl. This "end pin" also serves as the spot where the strings are secured to the base of the instrument. In theory, the wooden end pin should tuck neatly under your right knee and be held snug by your calf and femoral bicep muscles. The igil should not move if you take your hands off of the instrument. The igil can also be played if the musician is seated on the ground. The instrument would be positioned directly between the legs for balance or can be positioned on the outside of the left leg and balancing on the ground.

Bowing is also similarly challenging. Coming from the west, and having had string method classes for my education degrees functioned as hinderance rather than help. Unlike other bowed chordophones in Inner and Central-Asia, including the morin khuur, synonymous with Mongolian music, the Tyvan igil is played with both strings at the same time always. There is no single string igil playing. When the esteemed Tyvan ethnomusicologist Valentina Süzükei began documenting the instrument in Soviet times, she first set out to learn how the instrument was tuned she asked an elderly igil player to play the first note. In turn, he bowed both strings and again she asked him to play the first note only. He bowed both strings and so this process went

until the igil player became exasperated and walked away to calm down. Süzükei came to realize she could not look at this instrument as a Soviet/Western ethnomusicologist, but instead emic as a Tyvan (Levin & Süzükei, 2006). I also had to let go of my string method training and be as Tyvan as I could.

The bow grip for the igil is also unique. The instrument is bowed with the right hand, but the player uses an under handed grip with the palm facing up. The middle and ring finger control tension on the bow hairs while the thumb, first and last finger are used for balance. By using your right hand, palm up, you are giving music as a gift to your audience and the spirits. In other Central and Inner-Asian cultures, including Tyva, the right hand is used to also give and receive gifts. As the lesson progressed, or at least it did in my mind, the first step was making a “nice” sound, according to bashky. Learning to draw the bow across both strings from tip to tip evenly near the tone hole would allow for the warm sound that bashky called “nice”. He had me practice this just for a solid thirty minutes.

The last thirty minutes of the lesson involved where on the finger board the notes were and now to properly bow and finger at the same time. On the low string we tuned to a D, notes were sounded not be pressing the string down to the fingerboard as you would a violin or guitar, but rather gently touching the inside of the string with the cuticles of your left index and middle fingers. The sensation is like nothing from western music, but you feel the vibrations of the notes first at the tip of your fingers and down into the wrist. As to the notes on the low string, you move up a pentatonic scale, but when you reach tonic again at the octave, the left ring finger is placed over top of both strings in the same way you draw harmonics out of a guitar or banjo on the fifth, seventh and twelfth frets respectively.

Moving into the second octave, your left hand comes back down to the fifth scale degree, but instead this is fingered with your thumb on the outside of the string, while simultaneously pressing the tip of left index finger on the outside of the high string. As you move up the pentatonic scale again, your thumb stays in place on the low string and you make stretches with your last finger for the highest notes. All the while the bowing is legato and instead of articulating each note with a new bow stroke, several notes are played on each stroke – not slurring, but rather changing the stroke of the bow when there is nothing left to draw. Ideally, you must be playing each note of the scale on two strokes of the bow, up and down, and once you have achieved this, the student moves on to playing two notes on each stroke then three.

At the end of the lesson, Bashky was headed to the aal again and would return maybe in two weeks. He asked that the igil stay locked in the Alash office downstairs at the TCC, and of course I assured him that is the only place the instrument would stay and where I would exclusively practice. I had a sinking feeling that this might be my only lesson while in Tyva, not knowing when or if Bashky would return. Further, my left knee was giving me trouble from the initial fracture, and what I did not know was that the meniscus was also torn. That evening, after a long and heart wrenching conversation with my wife back home in New York City we changed my airline ticket to come home in two days time. My left leg was completely swollen, the brace was of no use and I was having a tough time walking. With all due respect, Tyva is one of the last places on earth one wants to find themselves with any kind of medical issue, let alone a foreigner with no access to the Russian hospital system.

My last full day in Tyva was not easy. Feelings of distress and failure swept over my body and mind. I had to talk to Igor and Andrei at the TCC to let them know I had to go home for medical reasons. Though all of this, something wonderfully Tyvan happened. Friends and

various khöömeizhi at the TCC asked why I did not own or perform in traditional Tyvan clothing, including the full body length silk robe called a Тыва Тон (Tyva ton). I have always been weary of westerners putting on the "ethno-garb" and told my colleagues at the TCC that I was not Tyvan and was unsure if it was appropriate to wear their national clothing. I think maybe there was some confusion that I was asking permission to perform in the national clothing. Most importantly, the Director of the TCC called me a хөөмейжи (khöömeizhi). Khöömeizhi is a title given to someone officially recognized as a performer of Tyvan khöömei. I was fighting back tears. To have Igor Koshkendey call me a khöömeizhi is one of the great honors of my life.

With the blessing of the TCC, I set out west down Ulitsa Lenina with Bichen and Chinchi to the shopping district of Kyzyl. They knew where I could find the national clothing. Once we reached the "Я💔Кызыл" sign we made a left into the shopping area. Along the way, albeit just a large city block, there was an outdoor food vendor selling apple flavored kvass. Kvass is a .5% abv beverage in the Russian speaking world and my friends wanted me to try it, and so I had a paper cup of street kvass with them. We reached Kochetovo Street at the end of the shopping district and made a left turn heading east. A few hundred feet later we arrived at the clothing shop and I realized that I had been there a year before.

I was keen to try my Tyvan so with a smile on my face I said to the woman, "мен Тыва Тон сонуургап турар мен. Мен улуг мен!" Essentially, "I am interested in a Tyva Ton, I am a giant." Her face went from surprise of seeing a giant American walk into her shop, to a big smile and hearty laughs at my announcement. If I had time, she could have tailored something custom for me, but as fate would have it, she had a single blue silken and gold trim Ton that fit me. The Ton has several Tyvan knotwork designs on it that are also common in Tibetan Buddhism. We

next found a bolt of yellow silk and she cut off enough to make a proper belt. My friends approved of the style and I made my purchase.

We quickly walked back to the TCC to bid farewells and retrieve my suitcase. After a few moments and tearful goodbyes my friends and colleagues Chinchi and Bichen gifted me a Tyvan демир хомус (demir khomus). The Tyvan demir khomus (121.221) is a plucked idiophone made from metal. To play the instrument, the frame sits centered over your front teeth with the tongue of the instrument on the right side of your mouth. The tongue is gently plucked in the direction of the mouth with the right hand first finger from above. Various tones are achieved by changing the position of the tongue muscle in your mouth as well as gently blowing air to speed the vibration of the metal tongue. While the khomus may not be fully indigenous to the Altai-Sayan region, they have been part of the musical culture for centuries. Recently, a still playable 1,700 year old khomus, made from either a cattle or horse, was found in a Scythian burial mound (Brady, 2018). Illustration 16 is the demir khomus gifted to me.

Illustration 16

Demir Khomus

I will always be in awe of the culture of generosity in Tyva. We three friends sat on the leather sofa on the second floor of the TCC, while the director gave me a quick lesson on my new instrument. I managed to make a halfway decent sound just in time for my taxi to take me to Sean Quirk's home for a last meal and rest before Olcha would come at 10:00PM to take me and six other passengers to Abakan. It was a somber time, given I was heading home two weeks early, but there was still some humor. I was served a bowl of sheep brain soup while Sean and his family had some leftover offals from an izig khan. I am close enough with Sean's wife that she knows I do not have a keen taste for sheep brain and it was a fun joke to watch me have my soup. At the appointed time, we made another artysh ceremony and I was wished a *white road* for the long journey home.

I was the first to be picked up and we spent another hour or so snaking through the dimly lit streets of Kyzyl picking up my fellow passengers. We crossed the bridge over the Yenisei into the dark Siberian night. Shortly after the lights of Kyzyl were no longer visible, I took a photo of the empty road illuminated by the headlights of the van and sent it to my wife in New York City. I did not have the words then or now to describe my emotions. Three hours later we arrived at Tanzibey, and I have always wondered how people can eat heavy shashlyk at 2:30AM. I had a ginger ale and stretched my legs. We arrived at the Abakan airport around 5:30AM and as I could not check in, I set an alarm on my watch and fell asleep for an hour on the cold concrete floor. Soon enough, I was checked in and walking up the airstairs to the plane. I took one look around at the scenery, knowing I would come back to Tyva again, and walked through the door of the plane. I took my seat and fell asleep, it would still be another 33 hours before getting home.

July 17, 2019

Much had changed in the past year. I opted to take a medical leave of absence from school. I needed to be with my family full-time in New York City. The previous August of 2018, I filed the paperwork for the leave on a Monday, packed all day Tuesday and made the 907-mile drive home on Wednesday. After a few months of returning to normalcy, substitute teaching and enjoying being with my family full time, the first time in three years, I was able to get a mid-year appointment teaching high school music at an all-boys Catholic Highschool in the Parkchester neighborhood of the Bronx. It was fun to teach younger students global music cultures, including Tyva, and towards the end of the academic year we even hosted Chirgilchin. I knew I was doing a good job in my new position when a few students wanted to make sure that, "Mr. Koshkendey would sing Oidupaa style kargyraa with the bayan."

Three weeks after school was done, I found myself on fourteen-hour flight to Beijing out of Newark Liberty International Airport with a final destination of Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. Once again, I was sitting in a nice exit row in the coach section while my banjo was tucked away in First Class. Looking back now, there is no way anyone could have predicted the hell that was released on the globe from Wuhan, but I was quickly aware that I was in China as I stepped off the jetway and took in a breath that instantly burned from the oppressive pollution in the air.

The air was not the only oppression at Beijing International Airport. Going through passport control could have been comical if it were not real. Amongst the degrading processes that involve entering communist China included standing on a box to have your whole body scanned and photographed to be checked against the CCP's massive internal security databases all the while having every item searched in your luggage and being interrogated as to why I had four rolls of toilet paper with me. It would have been nice to have messaged my hosts in

Ulaanbaatar or the Mongolian family I was rendezvousing with at Beijing International, but due to the pro-Democracy demonstrations in Hong Kong, the Chinese internet security apparatus was running on overdrive blocking communications inside and outside of the country.

After a long eight hours in Beijing, I was on the flight to Chinggis Khaan International Airport in Ulaanbaatar. I sat in a row with two Mongolian women in their early twenties who were baffled by my presence, but eventually asked about my reason for visiting Ulaanbaatar. The opportunity had presented itself to teach at a school in one of the Гэр (Ger, the Mongolian word for yurt) districts on the hills that ring the Mongolian capital city. This would also give me the chance to learn more, firsthand, about Mongol хөөмий (khöomii) and what differentiates Tyvan and Mongolian vocal musics. It is important to note here that I am talking about differentiation in the musics so as not to imply a supremacy of either musics or approach the musics in terms of comparative musicology which historically examined non-European art musics and compared them to European Art Music (Merriam, 1977). Illustration 17 is a map of Mongolia.

Illustration 17

Map of Mongolia

(GISGeorgraphy, 2022a)

Ownership of throat singing and cultural appropriation is a very sensitive issue in Inner-Asia. In 2010 the United Nations granted Mongolia the cultural heritage documents for throat singing, but interestingly in the supporting documents, specifically in the geography section, reference Khovd, Tsengel Sum and Bayan-Ölgii in Western Mongolia as points of origin (UNESCO, 2010). This is important because these areas both contemporary and historically have large populations of Tsengel Tyvans who are active musicians. Supporting documents as published by UNESCO also use the transliterated Tyvan word khöömei for the music, not the transliterated Mongolian khöömii. In discussions with colleagues and consultants in Tyva, the feeling I understood was that Tyvans have very diverse opinions on ownership. Consultants I have worked directly with are not as much interested in *sole ownership* of the music, rather want a proverbial seat at the table and for their indigenous vocal music to be recognized as unique to Tyva. On the other end of the spectrum, Kyrgys (2013) argues that individual styles of khöömei are intellectual property of the khöömeizhi which should be protected by international copyright law.

Upon touching down at Chinggis Khaan International, we quickly cleared passport control – the opposite of China and were greeted by extended family who would be taking us to the apartment where we would be staying. The evening air was crisp, no hints of pollution, and there was an odd familiarity that I felt. Tyva and Mongolia certainly share aspects of their cultures. I rode with a cousin to a modern apartment on the east end of Peace Avenue in central Ulaanbaatar. Peace Avenue is a major thoroughfare that bifurcates Ulaanbaatar, running east and west through the city. The apartment was comfortable and modern, though we'd be sleeping up to fifteen people at a time in maybe three hundred square feet. Largely the antithesis of the Soviet style apartments I was used to staying in.

I should have known better, but after twenty eight or so hours of travel I was ready for sleep. My host's relatives, however, we ready for a midnight celebration. They had prepared a beautiful meal of lamb, buuz, salad and assorted Mongolian candies. The beverage of the evening was Golden Gobi beer and Chinggis Khaan Gold vodka. As I had given up drinking a year prior, I had a quarter glass of the vodka poured for me, dipped my right ring finger in it three times and between each dip, I flicked the drop of the vodka over my head and two shoulders. This was a polite way of offering a gift to the spirits, thanking my hosts and also a non-verbal gesture that I did not drink alcohol. Much like eating the offal a year earlier in Tyva, my host family appreciated the gesture and my demonstration of appreciating their cultural values.

I was asked to play a song for my hosts – before this, I was unaware that I could give a song as a gift – and played a bluegrass tune as well as the Tyvan song Kongorei (Коңгурей). Kongorei is a man lamenting the loss of his herd and people and one of my favorite Tyvan songs. I was surprised when my hosts began humming the melody, though it should not have given that Americans and English share root melodies of folk songs. My hosts also were pleased when I sang a little sygyt in the relative major key in the middle of the song. What really struck me was when after a few verses, they began singing with me, in Tyvan, not Mongolian. When I asked how they knew it in Tyvan, they told me the songs probably came from western Mongolia (home of Tsengel Tyvans). Eventually the lights went out, I found a spot on the couch and slept for a solid five hours.

In the morning, before everyone woke, I showered, changed, left a note on the table and went in search of coffee. I found a small café and minimart in the next building over. As I walked in, people stared in bewilderment at me. I just smiled back, and the smiles were in turn

returned as well. Interestingly enough, several children came up to me and began petting my arms and legs. Apparently arm and leg hair is abnormal amongst the Mongolians and the children were intensely curious. A strong Americano and some groceries in hand, I went back to the apartment to find my hosts finally waking up. The plan for the day was to head up to the Ger district to visit the school we would be teaching at and then secure provisions before heading to the countryside for the weekend. I knew that once we reached the countryside there would be fresh sheep in my very near future and I could not have been more thrilled.

Due to safety concerns for the teachers and students, I am not comfortable naming the school I taught at while in UB. The school itself is in one of the many Ger districts on the outskirts of the Mongolian capital, and is directly inside the largest municipal landfill in Ulaanbaatar. The roads leading to the Ger districts are not paved, there is no electricity, no running water, no sewage system, and families live alongside livestock. These conditions lead to continual outbreaks of cholera, tuberculosis, typhoid fever, and bubonic plague. While I was teaching in UB, there was active plague happening. Being in this Ger district was literally stepping into the Middle Ages. In this landfill, approximately 1000 adults and 200 children are permanent residents. These human beings live in a yurt or in some cases, simple nylon camping tents. Often, they are born, live and die young inside the landfill. When they die, the corpses are simply thrown back into the trash, I personally witnessed seeing rotting human remains amongst the other trash in the landfill. These poor souls live and die with no dignity all the while the government looks the other way. Illustration 18 shows garbage on top of human graves near the school in the landfill.

Illustration 18

Human Graves Covered with Garbage

The children at the school, predominately girls, were homeless, abandoned or orphans and in many cases rescued from child sex trafficking rings. In addition to sexual abuse the children were malnourished, suffered from rickets, bathed maybe twice a month, and were constantly itching from flea and lice infestations. Underage prostitution is a major problem in Ulaanbaatar that the municipal authorities, as best as I can tell, intentionally ignore. The headmaster of the school informed us that police are often bribed by pimps. At this school, girls as young as eight were selling their bodies for bread and the equivalent of a few pennies. Headmaster Bagsh, I'll use the Mongolian word for teacher for anonymity, regularly goes out at night on his own to rescue children. Bagsh is a force to be reckoned with as he trained and competed internationally in mixed martial arts. Thanks to the efforts of Bagsh and the teaching

staff, these children have a safe place to live, eat, learn and receive proper medical care. I had the opportunity to go with him on one of these missions and while we did not find any children in need of a safe home, we visited several other landfills to give food and yogurt drinks to families and children.

As a nice surprise for the children, we brought two car trunk loads of a nutrient rich yogurt drink. The price was less then seven pennies per container, but far too expensive for the children that did have families, let alone the children who were on their own. On that cloudy day in Ulaanbaatar dozens of smiles lit up amongst the children. The teachers and staff at the school shyly asked if they might have a yogurt as well, and of course we had plenty. Watching the children, teachers and staff slowly savor these drinks reminded me of the faces I have seen at home in New York City dining at Three Michelin Star restaurants where per person meals start in the neighborhood of three hundred dollars. As we headed back to the apartment, I am unashamed to say that I silently cried after what we had just seen. I wondered if as a researcher what I could possibly do to help.

In addition to preparations to go to the countryside, my hosts planned a cultural event for me. We flagged down a car – everyone is a taxi driver in UB with the going rate of three hundred Mongolian Tögrög per kilometer – and went into central UB. The Tümen Ekh (Түмэн Эх) folk ensemble performed daily, largely for a tourist audience. My hosts were curious to see how I felt about Mongol Khöömii and I was excited for the concert. The musicians were exceedingly talented and for those unfamiliar with Mongolian music, especially westerners, the performance was very informative. I took a seat closer to the back of the theatre, largely because there was a place to lean my back on in the amphitheater style seating. At the time, I was still reeling from the twelve-hour time change.

Naturally, I was most interested in the gentleman singing and playing морин хуур (morin khuur, 321.312). The morin khuur is certainly cousins with the Tyvan igil, both horse head bowed chordophones. The importance of the morin khuur to post-Socialist Mongolia cannot be overstated. The instrument has become a symbol of Mongolia and Mongolian culture manifested to the world. In 1992, immediately after socialism ended in Mongolia, the instrument was declared to be the national instrument of Mongolia and given the title *Төрүн Каан Хуур* (Törün Khan Khuur – State Sovereign Fiddle) (Tsetsentsolmon, 2015, p. 120). The process the morin khuur has undergone from simple horsehead fiddle to cultural symbol is a fine example of musical semiotics explored by Turino (1999). Turino (1999) explains the semiotic process a sign takes as:

> " (1) the sign, something that stands for something else to someone in some way; (2) the object, which is the "something else," or entity, stood for by the sign, be it an abstract concept or a concrete object;3 and (3) the interpret- ant, which is the effect created by bringing the sign and object together in the mind of a perceiver." (Turino, 1999, p. 222)

The Morin Khuur has undergone this semiotic process from an instrument (sign), a symbol of traditional culture (object) to finally a cultural symbol for the Mongolian people (interpretant) (Turino, 1999, p. 223). It is difficult to find a home in Mongolia that does not have a morin khuur displayed in a prominent fashion. If Tyva were a sovereign state, I do believe the igil would have the same designation. Illustration 19 is a morin khuur.

Illustration 19

Morin Khuur

(Munkhzul, 2021)

Traditionally the morin khuur was tuned a fifth apart like the igil, but modern morin khuur players largely tune the strings a fourth apart at F and B-flat. This tuning is a minor third above where most igil players tune and accounts for a brighter timbre in the morin khuur. Unlike the oval bowl shape at the bottom of the finger board, the morin khuur is instead a trapezoid box complete with F holes similar to western violins, cellos and basses. This “modernization” of the instrument dates to the twentieth century when much of the socialist world underwent various iterations of cultural revolutions. Modernization in Mongolia was much less repressive than the Stalinist purges that were referred to as the, “sewage disposal system” by Solzhenitsyn (1973, p. 24) or the Inner-Mongolian Genocide perpetrated by communist China during the disastrous

Cultural Revolution in 1966 that led to the deaths of 100,000 Mongolians within Inner-Mongolia (Haiying, 2017).

As I listened to the performance, I heard similar technique, but sonically the music was different. The male singer first played a melody on the morin khuur, and what caught my eye was the amount of western style single string playing was involved. Unlike the igil which is played with both strings always, the various melodies on the morin khuur were played as a combination of single string melody with occasional two string melody and drone. The singer demonstrated two prominent styles of Mongolian khöömii, kharkhiraa and isgeree. Kharkhiraa is a cousin of Tyvan kargyraa and isgeree would be the similar to Tyvan sygyt. My ears were tuned to hear the overtones, which is what westerners find impressive about both Tyvan and Mongolian vocal music. Mongolian khöömii is not as thoroughly classified as the Tyvan counterpart (khöömei, sygyt, kargyraa, borbangnadyr and ezenggileer). Tongeren (2004, p. 123) believes there is a lack of classification because, “the vastness of Mongolia’s countryside and isolation of herdsman inevitably contribute to a great diversity of styles, which defy a uniform terminology.”

What interested me was the bright timbre of both styles as well as much more physical tension in the throat and chest to produce the khorekteer chest voice. In my experience there is equal amplitude in Tyvan music amongst the styles of Tyvan khöömei, but the Tyvans have a more warm and free flowing sound to their vocal music. This singer was pressing hard enough that he was sweating profusely, veins were visible in his temple and neck and his face was turning purple. I wondered if this could be healthy and sustainable in the long run. Finally, he closed his mouth and sang a high solo isgeree inside of the throat, which was quite impressive.

When the concert ended, I had hoped to speak with the performers, but plans were made to meet more family and then depart in the morning for the countryside.

It was going to be hot in UB over the weekend, which also meant the pollution would be worse – electricity is still produced by socialist era coal plants. We were told to be ready to depart at 10AM and I confirmed it was American 10AM not Mongolian 10AM. My host mom Odna laughed and confirmed it would be an American departure time. Our van was missing a few passengers and so once we were outside of UB, we stopped in a herder's field to wait for the relatives to get there by taxi. It was cooler than in UB and being jetlagged, I took a blanket and pillow to lay down on the soft and warm earth to look up and watch the black eagles circle over head. Forty-five minutes later I felt a wet sensation on my face, initially thinking the children were playing a trick on me. I opened my eyes to see a yak nose and tongue coming straight for me again. Everyone had a good laugh at my expense.

Two important cultural events happened that evening at the yurt camp. First, we had the Mongolian version of Tyvan izig khan called khorkhog. The lamb and root vegetables were cooked on top of layers of rocks inside of a wok resting on an open fire. Fortunately, the lamb had been slaughtered prior to our visit. I was asked if I wanted to see how it was done, but given I have participated in the slaughtering process in Tyva, I thanked my hosts for the honor, but passed. After dinner, a fire was built and we sat under the stars to exchange gifts. As we went around this circle some of the relatives stood and gave an oration of various epic poems, two women gave long songs while the rest sang folk tunes.

This is a tradition that dates at least to the thirteenth century in the time of Chinggis, but is certainly older. Marco Polo documented this tradition of song an epic poetry before battles, though, sadly did not document the texts of the stories and songs (Polo, 1300, p. 132;

Vladimirtsov & Krueger, 1983). What interested me was the folk tunes were a common repertoire and generally after the first or second strophe, everyone would join not just on the melody but in harmony. I was informed by my hosts that in socialist times, the communist government published folk songs in western notation and that in music classes, children were expected to learn the songs and harmonies. The result of this formal music education and centuries old tradition was a beautiful night under the stars on the vast Asian steppe with new friends, good music and good meat.

I am not a trained psychologist or trauma counselor. These were my thoughts as we drove up the winding dirt roads into the landfill to teach the children. Moreover, what in the world was I going to teach? I do not speak Mongolian. I was with Christian teachers, but I am not particularly well versed in Christian education, nor am I a practicing Christian. We also had soccer coaches that worked with the Mongolian national team, but a quick look at me would show that I also did not know the first thing about soccer beyond playing two seasons when I was in the third and fourth grade in the 1980s. Knowing that these children had all been repeatedly sold for sexual abuse, I decided to make my six foot five inch frame as small as possible, lower the volume of my speaking voice and smile gently.

As our caravan proceeded up the hill, children began following the cars to the school. I assumed word had spread that there would be foreigners and food. Many of the children following us had rickets from a lack of vitamin D and calcium and thus were running and walking bowlegged. When we arrived at the school, Bagsh and the children greeted us at the gates with big smiles. I found a gazebo that had been built by another NGO to setup under with my banjo, and began to just play. I assumed correctly that the children would be curious and they found their way to me. I continued to pluck away as the children gathered around me, drawn by

the foreign sound of the banjo and a giant American playing it. Some of the children petted my arm and leg hair and a made the sound of a sheep which elicited smiles.

I called my banjo an Америк топшуур (American topshyur). The Mongolian topshuur (321.321) is in the same family as the doshpuluur and other plucked chordophones including the banjo. The children liked the comparison and one little girl, who would become my best friend at the school, came up to me and said, “Beatles!”. I was surprised, looked back at her and nodded my head. Through an interpreter, I asked her what her favorite song was and she sang a few words of “Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da” from the *White Album*. The chord progression on the chorus, I-V-vi, I-V-I (McCartney et al., 1993, p. 725), was easy enough to play and as the lyrics are mostly syllables, “ob-la-di, ob-la-da, la la how their life goes on” (McCartney et al., 1993, p. 725) the students had success, and most importantly, fun singing the song with me. When we finished our song, the little girl gave me a big hug. Illustration 20 is a topshuur.

Illustration 20

Topshuur

(Khuur, 2016)

Bagsh informed me that he had found her five days earlier wandering the streets. She solicited him for 3000 Mongolian Tögrög, the equivalent of .90 cents USD. She had no home and no parents so he brought her to the school. For several days she did not want to be looked at and would not let the staff near her. The headmaster was moved to tears seeing this girl smiling and giving a big hug to another human, let alone a man. I was overwhelmed by this, and became numb thinking about what this poor girl had been through in her short life. Maybe I was not doing "serious" ethnomusicology field work, and probably not following the NAFME national standards, but I was doing real work connecting to another human being with music. It was a good day.

As the week continued, the routine was fairly the same and each day more children came to the little music gazebo on the far corner of the school. Much of the day revolved around me taking requests and the children singing pop songs. The main goal of the teaching was to use our areas of expertise to teach some rudimentary English to the children. They received English lessons via music, soccer, art and some Christian ministry. Over the years, I have formed a tradition of singing and teaching "You Are My Sunshine" wherever on Earth I found myself. Mongolia would be no exception and ever so slowly we learned the song. It never dawned on me to have my host mom and host grandmother interpret the words for the students until nearly the end of the week. By the time this happened, the children knew that I cared about them, and maybe the interpretation was needless.

At the same time this routine continued, I had the children share with me. We traded songs and stories. It was interesting to me that the girls predominately sang songs, while the boys gave epic poems. I do not believe songs and poems have gendered roles in Mongolian culture, but the boys spoke in a chest voice in a very bold fashion. As to the songs, my naivete was on

full display as I hoped the girls would share folk tunes instead of the latest by Ariana Grande and Taylor Swift. Of course, this was my selfish desire and was not within the mission of the teaching, but I am only human. In my travels through Inner-Asia I have discovered that hospitality and breaking bread together is culturally important. The children at the school insisted they share their бууз (buuz) with the teachers and even better give me a lesson in how to make the Mongolian dumpling.

Buuz tastes and looks similar to the Tyvan manchy, however they are twice as large. The insides are stuffed with the same meat mixture of cattle and sheep with vegetables and the dough is made from flour and boiling water. Further, they are not completely sealed on the top unlike their Tyvan cousins. Much like sitting in Galina's kitchen a year earlier in Kyzyl, I sat with the children as they showed me how to make the dough, stuff and fold the dumplings before steaming them. Some of the students found it comical how I struggled to fold them properly, while others shouted at me out of exasperation. Realistically, they were hungry and I was holding up their meal time. I was amazed at the speed and at the same time artistry the children employed, often folding the tops into floral patterns. After the steaming process, there were great meals with my little friends.

When the week ended, we distributed basic essentials to all the children including soap, shampoo, toothbrushes, toothpaste, winter coats and boots. My host family did a fantastic job raising the funds at home and securing all of these items for each child at the school. I will admit that I was skeptical of the Christian mission side of the teaching. My own prejudice led me to believe that what the children received would be tied to a conversion to Christianity. I am ashamed of my prejudice, but my hosts lived the concept of loving thy neighbor and nothing was held over the head of the children. The same went for the school. A few laptops were secured as

were dozens of children's books for the school library and basic school supplies like paper and pencils. Two years later, and through this pandemic, I am proud that we have maintained the relationship with the school and recently secured funding to help repairing the school's water tank and purchasing a yearlong supply of clean water for drinking, cooking and baking.

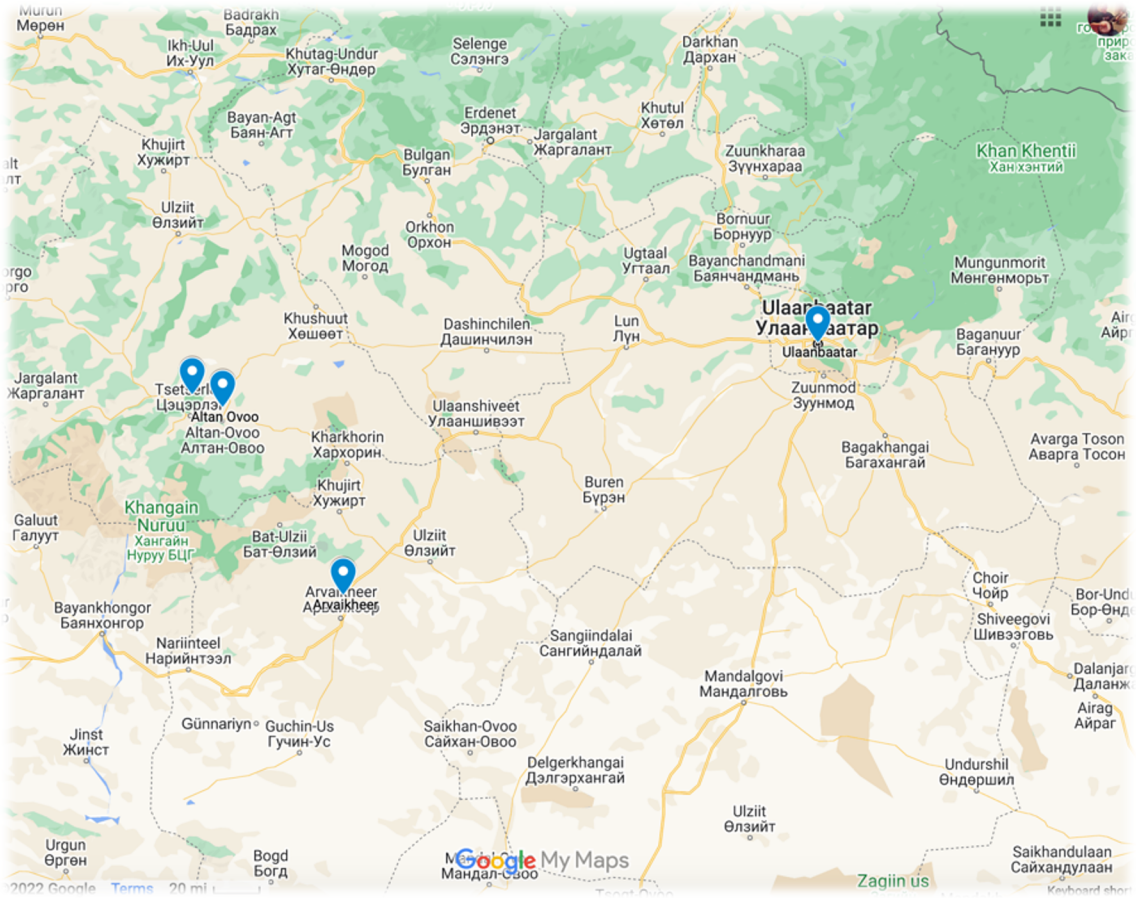
Just like that, I found myself having two weeks free in Mongolia. I wanted to experience nomadic life and had made arrangements to travel to the far west of Mongolia to live with a Tsengel Tyvan family at their summer pasture. Unfortunately, the father was experiencing health issues brought on by stress. Gold had been found on his ancestral land, but he had denied contracts to Chinese mines. This did not deter the Chinese and Mongolian governments from trying to push this family off their summer pasture and in addition to tending to their yak herd, they were now combatting illegal gold mining by the Chinese government enabled by corrupt elements in the Mongolian government. The hypocrisy on the part of the government was appalling, but not surprising. How could you hold up pastoralists as a symbol of what Mongolia is while at the same time ceding their lands to a communist dictatorship? While planning a different nomadic itinerary for the ensuing weeks, I had the opportunity meet with a presidential advisor as well as member of parliament. Without using names, I brought up the plight of my Tsengel Tyvan friends as well as the living conditions at the school we taught at. I do not know if it did any good, but both politicians heard me out.

After letting my host family know that my cross-country plans had fallen through, they invited me to tag along with them on their own road trip deep into the Mongolian steppe. The end destination would be, for me, Цэцэрлэг (Tsetserleg) by way of Өвөрхангай Аймаг (Övörkhangai Aimag), through the northern tip of the Gobi Desert to Хархорин (Kharkhorin) and Алтан Овоо (Altan Ovoo). Our mode of transportation would largely be a travel van with

off road capabilities, but also camel, horse and of course reaching destinations by foot that were inaccessible by vehicle or pack animal. Each destination would prove to be important to Mongolian culture and I had the chance to live out of non-tourist yurts. First to rise, per usual, I had a hot shower, got clean shaved, procured three gallons of water for the first few days on the road and had a final ice americano at the local café. When I arrived back, my family was set to go and upon seeing the water I purchased, laughed at me. My host mom declared, “We not so third world here!” With that, we loaded up the van and headed west into the steppe. Illustration 21 is a map of locations visited while in the Mongolian countryside.

Illustration 21

Map of Locations Visited in the Mongolian Countryside



Traffic in UB is atrocious, but once out of town the roads, much like the steppe, were wide open. Sitting next to my host mom's father turned out to be quite enjoyable. By the time we hit the road, I had known him for two years, but communication had been quite limited due to me not speaking Mongolian and him not speaking English. As it turned out, he had studied engineering and mathematics in East Germany during the Cold War. Bumping up and down on the cracked pavement of the Mongolian freeway system the two of us chatted *auf Deutsch* about life, Mongolia and music. While I probably cannot discuss in detail the works of Goethe in fluent German, our conversations were lovely, and I finally got to know this proud Mongolian gentleman. Sadly, he died suddenly in October of 2019. I will forever treasure our conversations.

Upon reaching the northern most dunes of the Gobi Desert, we stopped for a meal of fried хуушуур (kuushuur, a pastry pancake stuffed with tender lamb meat) and fresh strawberries picked on the steppe. Camels both domesticated and wild live in this area of Mongolia, and to make extra money herders will arrange caravans for tourists. The van drove off and the next two miles across the dunes would be by camel. Both Tyvan and Mongolian saddles are made from wood and quite uncomfortable, so I opted to ride bareback with a small blanket between the humps. Beneath the blanket were stirrups that were not prepared for my size thirteen boots. This particular camel I was about to spend several hours on was quite docile and probably used to tourists, but when she decided to stand her seven-foot self up, she waited for no one and certainly not a tourist to get his boots properly into the stirrups.

My damaged knee bent in a way it should not have and there was an audible snap and a corresponding wince from myself. I nearly fell from this beautiful creature, which would have been a catastrophe. As I centered myself, the herder proclaimed that the American looked like a fool on the camel. What surprised me the most was that he was speaking Tyvan and I kindly

replied back with, “Мен Тыва-дыл өөренип турар мен!” (Men Tyva-dyl öörenip turar men – I am learning Tyvan language). Both herders were shocked and embarrassed to have a tourist snap back at them in their native language. We quickly made peace and began our ride over the desert. I had listened to stories in Tyva about herders calming camels by singing хову кагыраа (khovu kargyraa) steppe kargyraa and as we rode across the dunes. I thought of the Tyvan song *Артыы-Сайыр* (Artii Saiyir – The Far Side of the Dry River Bed) and at the high end of my vocal range, tried achieve proper steppe kargyraa. Who knows what the camel thought, but to sing this song while riding the camel across the Gobi was certainly an important experience during my time in Mongolia.

After our trip across the dunes, we turned south for several more hours. As the sun began going down, we arrived at a relative’s yurt camp just north of Арвайхээр (Arvaiheer), which sits in roughly the geographic center of Mongolia. The camels proved to be a smoother mode of transportation than the van did, and my damaged knee was terribly swollen. We had a simple meal of buuz and I played a song for the relatives before going to the yurt to rest. Tradition yurt beds take some adjusting to. Essentially, it is a sheet of plywood with a woolen blanket maybe a half inch thick on top. I made the best of the situation and built a fire in the stove, hoping the heat would increase blood flow and ease some of the pain. I drifted off to sleep looking at the stars through the vent hole in the ceiling.

Knowing that the latrine at the camp was open air with no doors or walls, and I could not alter my modesty overnight, I rose right after sunrise. The air was crisp and the steppe was quiet. The morning procedure over the latrine hole in the ground is a technique I have never mastered, but essential to life outside major cities in Inner-Asia. There is no cultural modesty with this basic function like there is in the West. If you have to go, you go. As I was awake before

everyone else, I took the time to help make a solid breakfast of coffee, fresh eggs, yak cheese and lamb sausage plus leftover buuz. I asked the relatives, with the help of Google Translate (prior to leaving UB, I downloaded the entire Mongolian dictionary for offline use), if I could ride a horse around their pasture and they kindly obliged. The mare was gentle with me as we trotted around the pasture. I believe the relatives were impressed that I did not use a saddle, but I prefer a blanket to wood any day.

The importance of Chinggis to Mongolian Culture cannot be overstated and this is also felt in Tyva as well. Lake Chagatai is named after the second son of Chinggis and the name Chinggis is quite popular for boys. We proceeded north towards Kharkhorin, the capital city Chinggis established in the thirteenth century for his empire. I was not prepared to visit the impressive Эрдэнэ Зуу (Erdene Zuu) archeological site and functioning Buddhist monastery. Erdene Zuu was built in 1585, several centuries after Chinggis established his capital, when Tibetan Buddhism was declared the official religion of Mongolia. Further, Erdene Zuu has the distinction of being the oldest Buddhist monastery in Mongolia (Kuzmin, 2012). While this site does not date to the period of time when Chinggis lived in Kharkhorin, the stones used to build the temple complex came from his capital city. We were informed that the city itself existed at least as early as the Seventh Century CE.

In post-communist Mongolia, religion is an important marker of cultural identity. Much like Tyva, the dominant religions are Tengrism and Tibetan Buddhism. From 1585 CE until the socialist revolution, Tibetan Buddhism was the official state religion of Mongolia, however with communism came anti-religious sentiments. The shamans and lamas of Mongolia met the same fate as their brethren in Tyva. When religion was repressed, the lamas were shot or sent to Soviet Gulags. Erdene Zuu lay dormant for several decades until the Mongolian government reopened it

as a museum. The Soviets did the same when St. Basil's Cathedral in Red Square was converted into a museum of atheism. Forward thinking forces in the communist governments should be acknowledged for not destroying these ancient sites.

Since the end of communism, the monasteries, including Erdene Zuu, have been restored and function again as places of worship and learning throughout the country. I have come to believe that had the communist government of Mongolia not repressed Buddhism, they would have done themselves a massive favor. Buddhism teaches that suffering is part of life and to accept things as they are (Fowler, 2021).

The monastery complex is amazing. The fence that surrounds the monastery is nearly two kilometers in total length and is ringed with 108 stupas. 108 is a symbolic number in Tibetan Buddhism and is also the reason the mala contains 108 beads. The complex today is vibrant and houses 1000 monks, welcomes worshipers and tourists alike. I took a few hours to walk the grounds, look at the art, observe the monastic life as well as attend prayers. I have no idea what the prayers were intended for, but the Gyuke (the lowest tones, similar to Dag Kargyraa) captured my imagination. So here again, so very far from home, I was completely at peace and completely at home. After thirty minutes of prayers, the faithful left the temple and I followed. A wind had picked up and the prayer flags as well as chalama snapped in the air. Due to the way they were tied down, they created a humming noise not unlike the Gyuke I had just listened to. While I am not a practicing Buddhist, I was humbled in the presence of this ancient religion. I sat down on the ground near a white and golden stuppa to meditate on what I had witnessed. Illustration 22 shows the stupas and walls of Erdene Zuu.

Illustration 22

Stupa and Walls of Erdene Zuu

My host family found me outside the temple and told me it was time to get to the camp for the next few evenings. I was not ready to leave this holy site, but I was also not ready for a ten mile walk to the camp, should I had been left behind. We arrived before sundown and I was pleasantly surprised to find that my bed for the night was an actual thin mattress and not a piece of plywood. Our hosts at camp made a khorkhog, luckily the sheep was already slaughtered. As it turned, out this camp was made in mind of more cosmopolitan Mongolians, glamping if you will, and in the mess hall there was an ice machine (the water was filtered) as well as an espresso machine. Suffice it to say, I was in heaven. I was able to walk down to the Orkhon River to bathe and practice my khöömei borbangnadyr with the rhythm of the rippling water. Other times I found empty pasture to have an espresso, look at the sky and watch the black eagles. In the evenings we would watch the stars, sing and have more meat.

The next stop would be Цэнхэр (Tsenkher Hot Springs) via Алтан Овоо (Altan Ovoo). I was relieved that the drive was only going to be twenty miles. Our first stop was the pasture of

the regional head of Altan Ovoo. Apparently, he had gotten wind that there was a group of American-Mongols in the area and we were invited to visit him and his family. He was a delightful man and very curious about what I was doing in Mongolia. I played some banjo and sang Tyvan khöömei for him and in turn he shared fresh mare's milk with us. Milk from a horse is an acquired taste, but I have grown to prefer it to cow milk. There is less fat and more vitamins in horse milk. On the side of his yurt closest to the door, there was a giant leather bag that contained airag, a Mongolian fermented drink made from horse milk. The alcohol content is next to nothing and largely serves to preserve the milk longer. In addition to being a politician, this man, and by extension his family, had a close connection to his horse herd. The animals provided food, transportation and high status as he was a Naadym champion horse racer as well. Illustration 23 shows trading song for airag inside the politician's yurt.

Illustration 23

Trading Song for Airag

He was pleased that I enjoyed the horse milk, and invited me to go with his children and wife to milk the mares. I have never milked an animal in my life, and to start with a horse was a daunting task. While I was failing at this basic task of pastoralism, it was nonetheless important to experience. The wife and children were patient and guided my hands. There were smiles and laughs abound. The horse was calm with me and I was gentle with her. Much like Tyva, the horse is critical not only to cultural identity, but daily life and existence. When we left, we were gifted a bottle of airag for our journey, it was incredibly generous on the part of this nomadic family.

Because of the rain, the dirt roads over the hills to the hot springs were reduced to six inches of mud. Our off road vehicle could not navigate the road. After pushing the bus uphill for a kilometer, the driver found an alternate route that was many miles long, and requested that we meet him on the south side of the hill closer to camp. I grabbed my banjo case and stuffed in some toiletries as well as clean clothes into the front pocket and started the long climb. An hour later we reached the peak of the hills and had a fantastic view. Stopping to rest and eat some leftover khorkhog, we waited for another thirty minutes for the van to meet us. The downhill ride was just as adventurous through the mud and past herds of yak. We eventually arrived at camp and quickly made our way to the hot spring. Not having had a hot bath in just under a week, the feeling of slipping into the hot water was exquisite. After a thorough soaking, dinner was a familiar sight, a cheeseburger. The taste of the meat and cheese was far richer than here in the states and as it turned out, it was ground yak meat and yak cheese. That evening I was too tired to socialize, lit a fire in the yurt's stove and fell asleep.

The final days on this trip were spent in Цэцэрлэг (Tsetserleg). My Mongolian-American hosts were going up to private land just past Tsetserleg to work on construction of a home for

retirement with accompanying acreage to put up a small tourist yurt camp. I will confess that sleeping in the open air and laying cinderblocks for two days was not a high priority for me. To that end I found an accommodation run by an Australian man and his wife to stay in. The café attached to the hotel is a hotspot for locals and foreigners alike as it has free WiFi, fantastic food and a real La Marzocco espresso machine that was imported from Italy. The hotel itself had real beds, real toilets and hot showers. I wondered what Shangri-La I had stumbled upon.

After lunch, my host family departed and I took the time to take a walk around the city. I met several friendly people wondering what I was doing in Tsetserleg and I tried my best to explain. When I asked what I should do, people pointed to a temple on the top of a mountain and also informed me about a museum in town with pre-communist musical instruments. With that my agenda for the next day was set and I returned to the hotel in time for dinner. After dinner, I gave an impromptu bluegrass concert for the guests and curious locals that lasted a half hour or so. My room that evening was shared with a kind older woman from Zurich on a "bucket list" trip, as best as I could decern from my German. After an extended call home I was ready to sleep.

When I woke, my roommate was gone and that evening I would have the room to myself. I opted for a solid breakfast and hot shower before going to climb the mountain to see the temple. When I arrived at the foot of the mountain, I was relieved to see a stairwell that wound its way six hundred feet to the temple at the summit. As you walked through the gate to the stairs, there was a faded sign that read "Тэнгэрлэг гэгээрлийн ололт амжилтын эгнээ" and a small English translation underneath informing that was on the "Divine Enlightenment Achievement Lane". At the summit was the Галдан Зуу (Galdan Zuu) temple and a twenty-foot

tall statue of the Buddha that overlooked Tsetserleg. Illustration 24 shows the steps leading up the Divine Enlightenment Achievement Lane.

Illustration 24

Divine Enlightenment Achievement Lane

Had I been home in New York and faced with this climb, I would have not done it, but I knew that it had to be done. Up the Achievement Lane I went. It took the better part of an hour, I paced myself with my bad knee as well as being terribly out of shape. I stopped at every vantage point to look out south over the city and the surrounding countryside. At each stop there were stone statues and prayer wheels to admire and circle respectively. In the distance there were small white dots, which I knew to be the yurts of nomads, scattered across the vast steppe. Finally, I made it to the top and took a seat on the rocks to look out one more time. I wondered to myself just how in the world did I get to where I was at.

I thought to myself, here is this guy who is a banjo player and music educator that does not really fit the mold of a K-12 music educator. I am not interested in marching or ensemble contests, and had lost any real interest in conducting, which is a shame due to taking two years of my life to earn a graduate degree in conducting. Through my entire career as a music educator, I realized that I was desperately trying to be something that I am not. So there in Tsetserleg, on top of the mountain in the shadow of the Buddha, for the first time in my career as a musician and educator, I accepted myself. I thought back to a conversation with my mentor Dr. Skip Taylor who bluntly asked me, "When are you going to put down the baton and admit who you are?" I'm unsure as to why it took several expeditions to the other side of earth and a climb up a mountain to figure this all out. Had it not been for the sight of a bull, horse and yak walking down the main street of Tsetserleg in the distance, I probably would have become overwhelmed with emotion, but instead I laughed at the sight of it all.

After some time and a trip into the monastery itself, I descended down the stairs and had a new sense of purpose about me. The afternoon would be spent at the Arkhangai Aimag Museum. According to the signs in English, the museum was originally a temple that was built in 1586, about the same time Erdene Zuu was built, and housed up to 1000 monks. Given the propensity of the communist governments to tear down any religious site, it is nothing short of a miracle that this beautiful temple still exists today. I suspect, much like St. Basil's in Red Square, turning the temple into a museum saved it from destruction.

The exhibits were all fascinating and dedicated to Mongolian culture, but I was most interested in the collection of pre-Communist instruments, specifically what the morin khuur evolved from. My suspicions were correct that the ancestor would be similar to the Tyvan igil. Prominently displayed on the wall was a two-string bowed chordophone (321.321) called a Луун

Xyyp (Luun Khuur – Dragon Khuur). Interestingly, and likely due to being part of the Qing dynasty in pre-Communist Mongolia, the instrument had a Dragon head on top rather than a horse head. The description in the case described the instrument as being made in the late 19th Century and the ancestor of the morin khuur. There were no descriptors on tuning or how the instrument was to be played, but given the height of the strings over the finger board, I assumed it would be similar to the igil and other bowed chordophones in Inner-Asia. I was unsure if photos were allowed or not, so covertly, I quickly raised my iPhone and snapped a picture.

I will never fully understand ownership of musical traditions in Inner-Asia, I am an outsider. After spending time learning from and observing both musical cultures in Tyva and Mongolia, I have come to my own conclusions that the Altai-Sayan area of Inner-Asia, which encompasses the Republic of Khakassia, Republic of Tyva, Altai Republic, Buryatia and Mongolia is a Mesopotamian-esque fertile crescent of throat singing. Much like each city state in ancient Mesopotamia that was unique but shared heritage, so are the unique styles of khöömei found within the region. No one style is any better or worse than the other, and the constant bickering over ownership, I believe, is counterproductive on the global stage.

Across the Altai-Sayan, this interpretation can and should be debated, but the consultants I have worked with and learned from have conceded that I have a valid point. The major issue in ownership is claiming that one country invented the music and then sees all of their Altai-Sayan brethren as grifters. Even more egregious, is what I call the, “they us” phenomenon. Essentially this reduces people that were formerly conquered during the medieval empire of Chinggis and therefore do not have their own unique culture, rather are a variant of Mongolian culture. With this line of thinking Tyvans are refered to as Tyvan-Mongols, Altai-Mongols, Buryat-Mongols, Khakass-Mongols etc. Furthermore, cultures within the Altai-Sayan are blatantly stealing and

appropriating Tyvan songs and unique styles and claiming them as their own. As an outsider, I do not have a solution, only the understanding I have come to after field work in several regions of the Altai-Sayan.

I left the museum and returned to the hotel for a steak and conversation with a Russian gentleman from Abakan who was passing through on his was to UB. He was quite shocked that I had been to Tyva twice and planned to return the following summer (of course not knowing Covid19 was looming). I politely listened to his prejudiced thoughts on the Tyvan people. Not wanting to have an argument, after dinner I told him that I was facing the same twelve hour drive to UB in the morning and needed a good sleep. In the afternoon the next day my host family arrived and we made it back to UB just before two o'clock in the morning.

I had two days left in Mongolia, each was spent visiting relatives. The final day I was trying to hail a taxi to get into central UB. I was having little success, but when I saw a late 1980s Volga coming down the road, I somehow knew this Soviet era car would be my ride. The car pulled over and when I smiled, the father jumped out of the car, pointed at me and exclaimed, "Lost America!! Tyva!!!" A random Tyvan family instantly recognized me from various television and internet advertisements that I have appeared in and are still playing in Tyvan media. We were instant friends and for the next thirty minutes we chatted in Tyvan as well as some English that the daughter was learning in school. They dropped me off in central UB before making their way to the giant outdoor market to shop for clothing and housewares. I am still in contact with this family and have a standing invitation to stay with them at their home in Kyzyl the next time I find myself in Tuva.

On that final night, relatives showed up at the apartment, nearly at midnight with a foul-smelling plastic bag. It was a dead marmot. The same animal that was currently spreading

bubonic plague through UB via the fleas they carried. We all had to wake up, cook and eat this animal. My host mother opted to boil the animal and soon the apartment stunk of marmot. I tried to be quiet about it, but had to run to the restroom to vomit. I do not know if it was the smell or the fear of plague that caused the reaction, but luckily the relatives did not know I had gotten sick as it would have caused offence. I put a small piece of boiled marmot meat on my plate and made a show of consuming it. Probably from fear, after the relatives left, I again vomited the contents of my stomach.

I did not sleep much that evening and spent the day packing and saying goodbyes. My host family was staying another week, but I was meeting my wife in China for a two-week holiday. I had hoped to get up to the Ger district one more time to visit Bagsh and the children, but sadly, time did not allow. After being in Mongolia just under a month, I was on a plane to Beijing a city that had a population seven times larger than then entire nation of Mongolia.

July 2021

Telling the story of the field work is critical to the dissertation. In order to make sense of both qualitative and descriptive data that has been collected I have done my best to accurately describe my travels through the Altai-Sayan, specifically the Republic of Tyva and Mongolia. Music plays a central role through the region, and in many ways Tyva and the Tyvan people manifest themselves to the world via their indigenous musical traditions. In the coming chapters, I will refer to the field work to help confirm and explain data collected for the purpose of this study

Chapter 5

Descriptive Results

After returning from the field in 2017, 2018 and 2019 respectively, it was more than obvious that the culture of the peoples of the Altai-Sayan was deeply musical. In the Republic of Tyva, specifically, much of what people outside of Tyva know of the culture is centered around Tyvan music. While conducting field work in Tyva, Tyvan music was referred to by the Tyvan people as their, *National Music.* Tyvan instruments (igil, doshpuluur etc.) were also referred to as our *National Instruments.* Tyvans also referred to throat singing as *Our khöömei*, implying a collective ownership of, at least the Tyvan variant, of the throat singing prevalent in the Altai-Sayan. I will refer to Tyvan vocal music as khöömei to avoid colloquialisms that can potentially cause confusion.

In 1994, I spent two weeks in July with my family in Saint Petersburg, Russia. This initial trip to Russia led to a lifelong fascination with the Russian culture. I first was exposed to Tyvan music in the late spring of 1998. My high school band director had a copy of Ted Levin's 1987 field recordings that were released in 1992 by Smithsonian Folkways' album "Tuva: Voices from the Center of Asia". Given my interest in both Russian culture and global music cultures, Mr. Gary Evans guessed correctly that the album would be a natural fit. From this point forward, Tyvan khöömei was always on my mind and the music kept coming back to me in various recordings from a wide variety of sources that included the documentary film "Genghis Blues" and Béla Fleck's collaborations with the late Kongar-ool Ondar. Field work in Tyva and

Mongolia between 2017 and 2019 confirmed what I had already believed. Tyva and the Tyvan people are indeed an incredibly musical culture and people.

The question of what the relationship between modern Tyvan cultural identity and the teaching and transmission of folk song were in this former Soviet space lingered. In the late autumn of 2019 plans were in place to enter the field again in July of 2020 and conduct in person interviews as well as act as a participant observer in khöömei classes. Just prior to mailing in the application for the correct cultural visa to do this work in the Russian Federation, the Covid-19 pandemic cancelled those travel plans. As 2021 approached an ongoing diplomatic dispute between the United States and Russia was exacerbated by both sides made obtaining a travel visas virtually impossible to obtain. In the early Spring of 2021, objective realization set in that between broken diplomatic relations and ongoing Covid19 travel restrictions, in person field work would be impossible. At this point the decision was made to conduct field work virutally with Qualtrics web software.

While I had observed that music was clearly important to Tyvan culture and theorized that music learning would either be influenced by Tyvan culture or contribute directly to a sense of being Tyvan in the modern world, data driven evidence beyond observations in the field was necessary for this study. Further, using a grounded method of discovery in the field would allow the voices of the Tyvans be heard. Recent scholarship by Mongush (2006) and Beahrs (2014) explored different facets of what contribute to modern Tyvan identity including language, geography, religion, and music as important markers of Tyvan identity in the post-Soviet era.

For the purposes of this study, initial data were needed that asked Tyvans what they believed to be important aspects of modern Tyvan identity. Using Qualtrics software, a four-point Likert scale was developed. Participants were asked to rank individually language, music,

religion, georgraphy, art and pre-Soviet nomadic life on the four-point scale. Ranking options were, “not important, somewhat important, important and very important.” I chose the four point scale specifically to eliminate neutrality in the data. Adams and Lawrence (2015, p. 85) suggest using the forced choice response in the Likert-scale as it, “requires the respondent to either disagree or agree to some degree” to the items on the survey.

After further consultations with my contacts at the Tyvan Culture Center (TCC), I translated the survey into Russian and included the original English. My original intent was to ask a colleague to translate the survey into Tyvan, but due to Russian being the state language and changes to the education system that emphasizes Russian (Hauer, 2018), I had no choice but to use Russian. Using the Russian language in this survey is also a glaring example of the ongoing colonialism in the Russian Federation.

Participants in the initial survey were recruited on a voluntary basis with the aid of the Tyvan Cultural Center in Kyzyl. After speaking with the director of the TCC to request permission to survey Tyvans, he agreed to distribute the survey to musicians, NGO workers and interested parties through both email and the Viber App distribution list the TCC keeps. Viber is ubiquitous in Tyva and used by many organizations to quickly distribute messages and information to mobile devices across the Republic. The survey was kept active for two weeks to ensure participants had the necessary time to complete the survey.

At the conclusion of data collection a total of 168 responses were collected. In terms of total population of Tyvans (approximately 260,000), the responses collected accounts for .00065% of the population. If this were a study on the population of the United States, I would have received 214,500 responses. To ensure complete anonymity, no demographic data (age,

gender, name etc.) was requested from the participants. Figure 1 is the initial Likert style survey as displayed on participant's devices after opening the survey link.

Figure 1

Initial Survey Distributed for Ranking Aspects of Modern Tyvan Cultural Identity

Please rank the importance of the following aspects of Tuvan Identity:

Оцените важность следующих аспектов тувинской идентичности:

	Not Important - не важный (1)	Somewhat Important - несколько важно (2)	Important - важный (3)	Very Important - очень важный (4)
Tuvan Language - Тувинский язык	○	○	○	○
Tuvan Music - Тувинская музыка	○	○	○	○
Religon (Buddhism, Shaman etc) - Религия (буддизм, шаман и др.)	○	○	○	○
Geography - География	○	○	○	○
Tuvan Art - Тувинское Искусство	○	○	○	○
Pre-Soviet Nomadic Life - Досоветский кочевой образ жизни	○	○	○	○

Results

Participants (*N = 168*) responded to each item according to what they believe to be important to modern Tyvan identity. The most surprising result was that Tyvan art had the highest mean score (*M = 3.50, SD = .726*). Tyvan music (*M = 3.45, SD = .795*) and Tyvan language (*M = 3.45, SD = .741*) scored equally, Geography (*M = 3.29, SD = .936*), Tyvan Religion (*M = 2.92, SD = .938*) and finally Pre-Soviet Nomadic Life (*M = 2.80, SD = .924*). Table 1 represents the complete descriptive statistics of the survey data collected.

Table 1

Complete Survey Results Ranking Aspects of Modern Tyvan Cultural Identity

	Tuvan Language Тувинский язык	**Tuvan Music** Тувинская музыка	**Religon (Buddhism, Shaman etc)** Религия (буддизм, шаман и др.)	**Geography** География	**Tuvan Art** Тувинское Искусство	**Pre-Soviet Nomadic Life** Досоветский кочевой образ жизни
Valid	168	168	168	168	168	168
Mean	3.45	3.45	2.92	3.29	3.50	2.80
Median	4.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	3.00
Mode	4	4	3	4	4	3
Std. Deviation	.741	.795	.938	.936	.726	.924
Variance	.549	.632	.879	.876	.527	.853
Range	3	3	3	3	3	3
Sum	580	580	490	552	588	471

Art and Music

Art was included in the survey due to the stone carving tradition in the Bai Taiga region of Western Tyva as well as the goldsmithing that ancient Scythian inhabitants of the Altai-Sayan did in the Ninth and Eighth Centuries BCE. Today in the Tyvan National Museum, there are fine examples of both stonework and the work of the ancient Scythians on display. The Scythian gold is a national treasure for the Tyvan people and designs still influence modern Tyvan art including the obelisk and statuary complex at the Center of Asia monument in Kyzyl on the south bank of the mighty Yenisei.

The results of the survey show art ($M = 3.50$, $SD = .726$) being valued slightly higher in importance than music ($M = 3.45$, $SD = .795$). However, participants responded both art and music equally at 61.3% "very important" ($N = 103$). 29.8% responded to art as "important", 6.5% "somewhat important" and 2.4% "unimportant" to modern Tyvan identity. In the music category 25.6% responded to music as "important", 10.1% "somewhat important" and 3% "unimportant."

I believe that Art had slightly higher value overall than music due to an error in translation as I prepared the survey. I used the Russian word Искусство (iskustvo) which translates literally to "art". However, I have since learned that when Искусство is translated into Tyvan Уран (uran), the word is understood more blanketly "the arts" which would necessarily include both visual but also Tyvan music. Regardless, the results of the survey demonstrate that both music and art are the two most significant markers of modern Tyvan identity. Table 2 shows participant responses to art as an aspect of modern Tyvan identity and Table 3 shows participant responses to music as an aspect of modern Tyvan identity. Figure 2 is a visual bar graph of survey results for art while Figure 3 is a visual bar graph for survey results of music.

Table 2

Survey Results for Art as an Aspect of Modern Tyvan Identity

Please rank the importance of the following aspects of Tuvan Identity:

Оцените важность следующих аспектов тувинской идентичности: -

Tuvan Art - Тувинское Искусство

	N	%
Not Important – не важный	4	2.4%
Somewhat Important – несколько важно	11	6.5%
Important - важный	50	29.8%
Very Important - очень важный	103	61.3%

Figure 2

Survey Results Bar Graph for Art as an Aspect of Modern Tyvan Identity

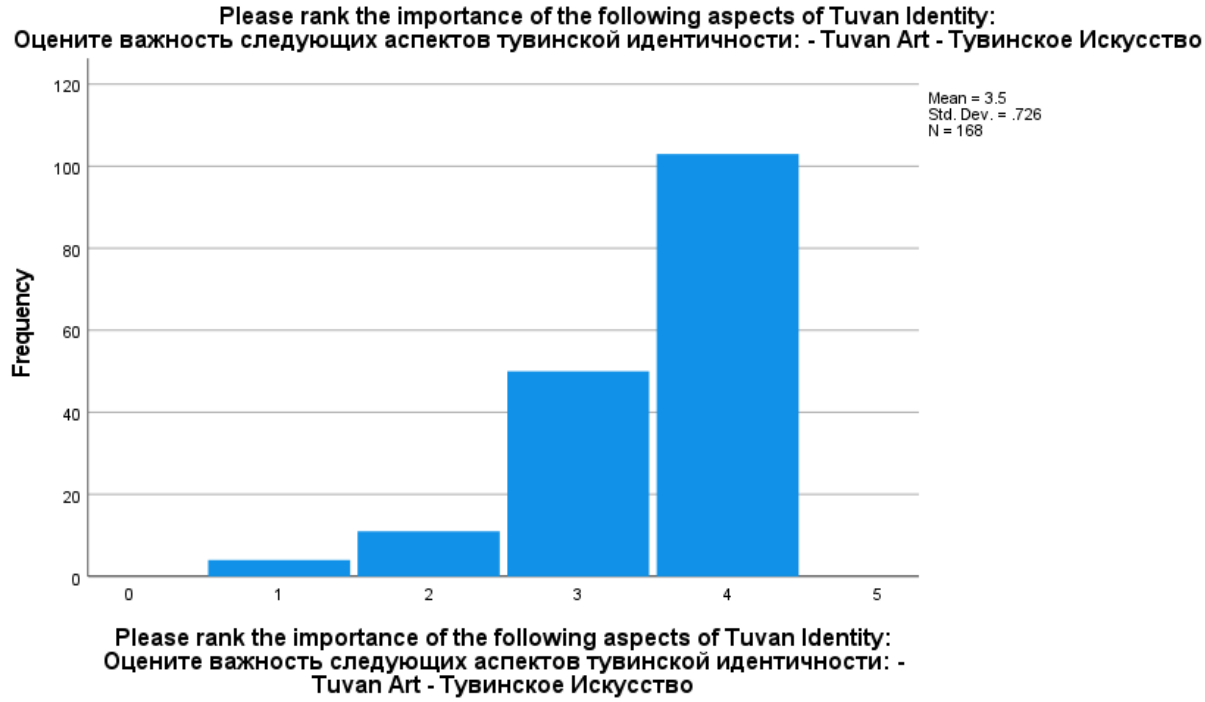


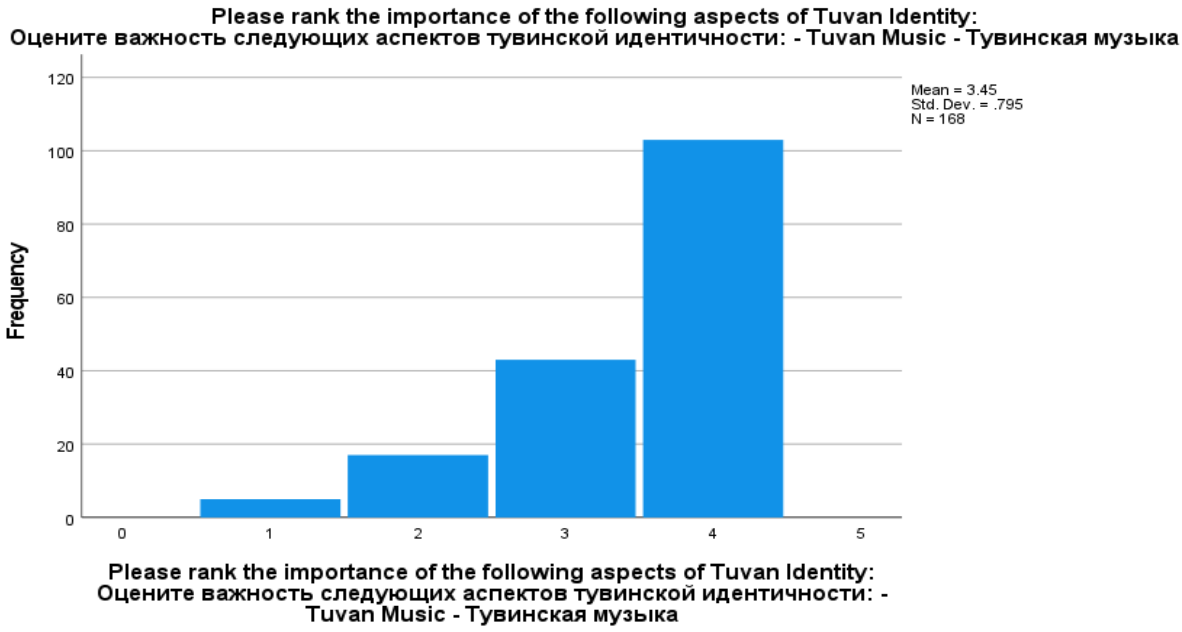
Table 3

Survey Results for Music as an Aspect of Modern Tyvan Identity

Please rank the importance of the following aspects of Tuvan Identity: Оцените важность следующих аспектов тувинской идентичности: - Tuvan Music - Тувинская музыка		
	N	%
Not Important - не важный	5	3.0%
Somewhat Important - несколько важно	17	10.1%
Important - важный	43	25.6%
Very Important - очень важный	103	61.3%

Figure 3

Survey Results Bar Graph for Music as an Aspect of Modern Tyvan Identity



Tyvan Language

In spite of current education policy that curtails indigenous language instruction (Hauer, 2018), fluency in both Tyvan language and Russian language is common in Tyva. In my own field work, once outside of Kyzyl, very rarely did I witness anyone speaking Russian. Chevalier (2010) reports official Russian government statistics that, as of 2002, 99.6% of Tyvans consider Tyvan to be their native language, not Russian. Poppe (2008) surveyed Tyvans ($N = 499$) on language usage at home, at work and amongst peers. In all three categories Tyvans overwhelmingly use Tyvan language amongst fellow Tyvan people. At home 57.2% responded using Tyvan exclusively. Amongst peers 20.8% reported using Tyvan exclusively and 76.2 % a mix of Tyvan and Russian. At work the majority spoke a mix of Tyvan and Russian at 84.8% and 8.1% exclusively used Tyvan (Poppe, 2008).

Results of this survey show that in terms of modern Tyvan identity ($M = 3.45$, $SD = .741$), 58.3% of participants believed language is "very important" and 30.4% responded to language as "important". 9.5% of participants found language as "somewhat important" while 1.8% responded that language is "not important." I do not believe there were any translation and interpretation issues with the question. Тувинский язык (Tyvinskii Yazuk) translates directly as "Tyvan language". Table 4 shows participant responses to language as an aspect of modern Tyvan identity. Figure 4 shows the language results in bar graph form.

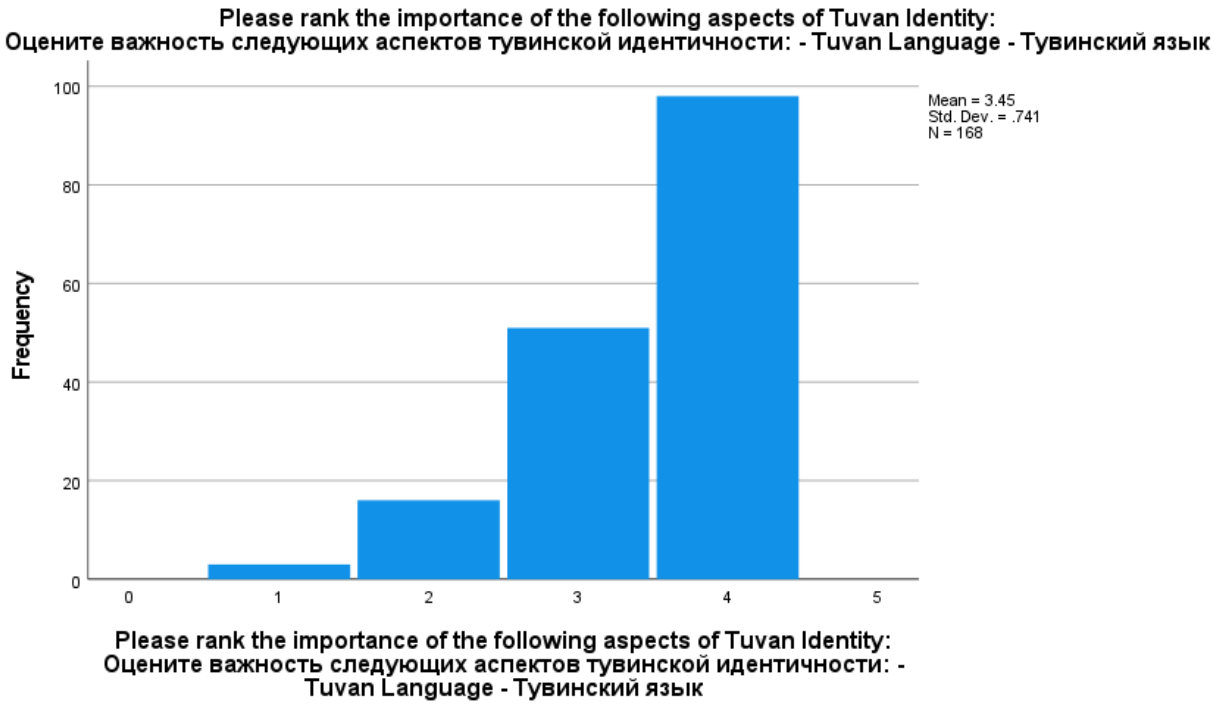
Table 4

Survey Results for Language as an Aspect of Modern Tyvan Identity

Please rank the importance of the following aspects of Tuvan Identity: Оцените важность следующих аспектов тувинской идентичности: - Tuvan Language - Тувинский язык	N	%
Not Important - не важный	3	1.8%
Somewhat Important – несколько важно	16	9.5%
Important - важный	51	30.4%
Very Important - очень важный	98	58.3%

Figure 4

Survey Results Bar Graph for Language as an Aspect of Modern Tyvan Identity



Geography

The Tyvans have a unique relationship with the land and thus geography can be considered an important marker of modern Tyvan identity. Tyvans, historically, have been isolated from the world with the Sayan Mountains forming a northern border and the Tannu-ool Mountains forming a southern border. Mongush (2006) notes that the Tyvans use the mountains to represent their geographic isolation. Tyvans, have a concept of going, "beyond the Sayans" (Mongush 2006, p. 289) to describe leaving Tyva for a range of needs like shopping for household goods in the Khakassian capital city Abakan, meeting foreign people and leaving Tyva for education. Mongush (2006) describes this expression of "beyond the Sayans" and "within the Sayans" as a "barrier formula" (p. 289).

Geography also has a role in regional cultures within Tyva and how Tyvans from different regions interact. Tyvans refer to themselves by the region of the republic they come from (i.e. Tozhu Tuvans, Bai Taiga Tuvans etc.) (Mongush, 2006). Within the geographic regions are various clan surnames which contribute to complex social structures. In the Soviet Era the Soyan, Choduu and Kyrgys families from the Tes Khem and Erzin regions traditionally held important government roles (Mongush 2006, p. 280). In the post-Soviet era region/geography and regional surnames often dictate politics, business and religious relationships in modern Tyva (Mongush 2006, p. 280).

Participants (N = 168) in this study were asked to respond to the importance of Geography in modern Tyvan identity. While not as important as music, art and language, geography was still valued and responses fall between "important" and "very important" (M = 3.29, SD = .936). 53% believed that Geography to be "very important", 31.5% "important", 6.5% "somewhat important" and 8.9% "not important." While there were no translation errors

and the question was clear, geography has more meaning to the Tyvans than simple borders and geographic features. Table 5 shows participant responses to geography as an aspect of modern Tyvan identity. Figure 5 shows the geography results in bar graph form.

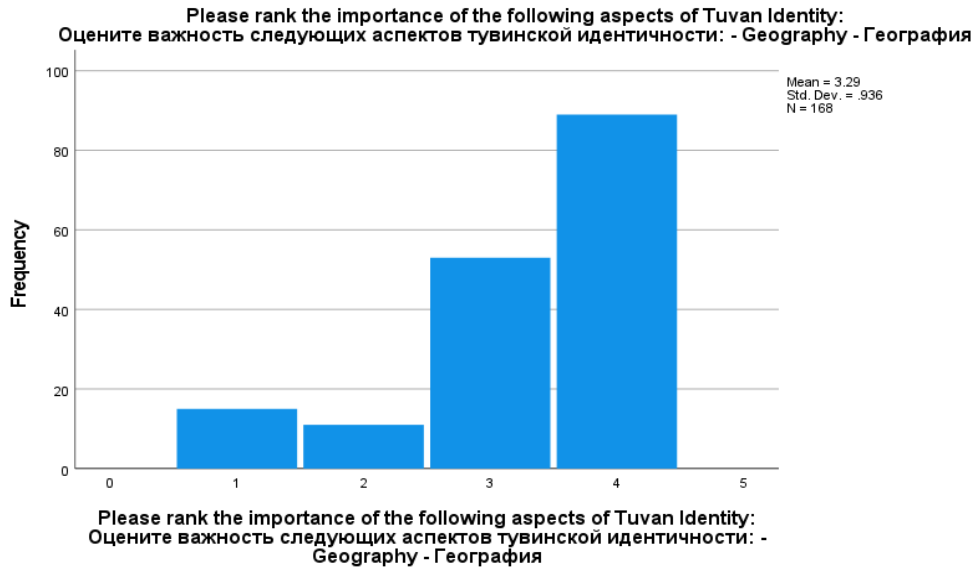
Table 5

Survey Results for Geography as an Aspect of Modern Tyvan Identity

Please rank the importance of the following aspects of Tuvan Identity: Оцените важность следующих аспектов тувинской идентичности: **Geography - География**		
	N	%
Not Important - не важный	15	8.9%
Somewhat Important – несколько важно	11	6.5%
Important - важный	53	31.5%
Very Important - очень важный	89	53.0%

Figure 5

Survey Results Bar Graph for Geography as an Aspect of Modern Tyvan Identity



Religion

Tyvans adhere to two majority religious practices, Shamanism and Tibetan Buddhism. There is also a minority population of Russian Orthodox Christians. While completing field work, it was clear that both Shamanism and Buddhism are important aspects of modern Tyvan identity. Seated atop Mt. Dögee, completed in 2021, is a massive golden Buddha that faces south towards Kyzyl and carved into the same mountain side the largest Om Mani Padme Hum mantra on earth. During the period of time Tyva was independent of both Mongolia and the Soviet Union (1921-1944), Tyva was a Buddhist state and religious protections were extended (Forsyth, 1992). These protections for religion as well as for the Lamas and Shamans ended in 1944 when Tyva became part of the Soviet Union, and saw most of the Lamas and Shamans purged under Stalin.

After passing into Tyva from Khakassia, it is easy to spot sacred Ovaas and whether one adheres to Shamanism, it is common to stop, leave a small offering of some rubles, milk or candies, circle three times and continue on your way. Tyvans use the help of shamans for many situations from simple to complex. It is common to have a Shaman bless your home, ask for relationship advice, cure diseases and as I witnessed, oversee an animal sacrifice. Today in Kyzyl, Lazo Mongush runs a prominent Shaman society founded by Kenin Lopsan (1925-2022).

When asked to respond to the importance of religion in modern Tyvan identity, participants in the survey (*N = 168)* valued Religion, both Buddhism and Shamanism slightly lower in importance than geography (*M = 2.92, SD = .938*). 31% view Religion “as very important”, 38.7% “important”, 21.4 % “somewhat important” and 8.4% “not important.” Due to using the phrase Религия (буддизм, шаман и др.) (Religion, Buddhism, Shamanism etc), there likely were no errors in participants misunderstanding the questions asked. The data collected

shows that religion is an important aspect on modern Tyvan identity. Table 6 shows participant responses to religion as an aspect of modern Tyvan identity. Figure 6 shows religion results in bar graph form.

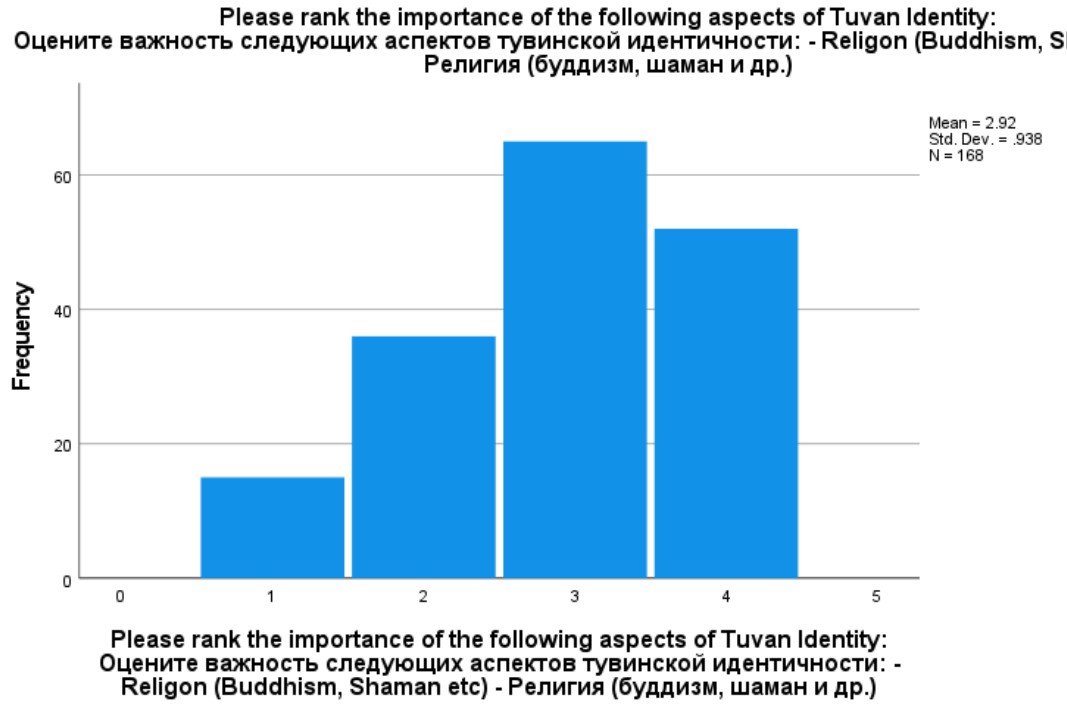
Table 6

Survey Results for Religion as an Aspect of Modern Tyvan Identity

Please rank the importance of the following aspects of Tuvan Identity: Оцените важность следующих аспектов тувинской идентичности: **Religion (Buddhism, Shaman etc) - Религия (буддизм, шаман и др.)**		
	N	%
Not Important - не важный	15	8.9%
Somewhat Important - несколько важно	36	21.4%
Important - важный	65	38.7%
Very Important - очень важный	52	31.0%

Figure 6

Survey Results Bar Graph for Religion as an Aspect of Modern Tyvan Identity



Pre-Soviet Nomadic Life

In 21st century Tyva, there is a population of people that have held on to and continue to practice pastoral nomadism as was done in the Pre-Soviet history. While these herders and nomads no longer represent the majority of the population, the practice and traditions are respected. Arat Square, the main square of Kyzyl is named after nomads and pastoralists. Arat, in the Tyvan language is understood, as a simple herder or nomadic person. During the 1921-1944 independent period, Tyva was officially the Tyvan Arat Republic. Outside of Kyzyl, where Naadym is celebrated each year is a 20 foot tall bronze statue of an Arat that people affectionately call the “Shepherd Man”.

Participants in the survey (*N = 168*) believed Pre-Soviet nomadic life to be lowest of all markers of modern Tyvan identity surveyed (*M = 2.80, SD = .924)*. 25% found Pre-Soviet nomadism "very important", 39.9% "important", 25.6% "somewhat important" and 9.5% "not important." There were no translation errors, but had I been able to use the Tyvan language, using the word Arat may have resulted in a higher mean score. Again, the inability to use Tyvan language is an example of the ongoing colonialism and colonial legacy in modern Tyva. Table 7 shows participant rankings of pre-Soviet nomadic life as an aspect of modern Tyvan identity. Figure 7 shows the pre-Soviet nomadic life results in bar graph form.

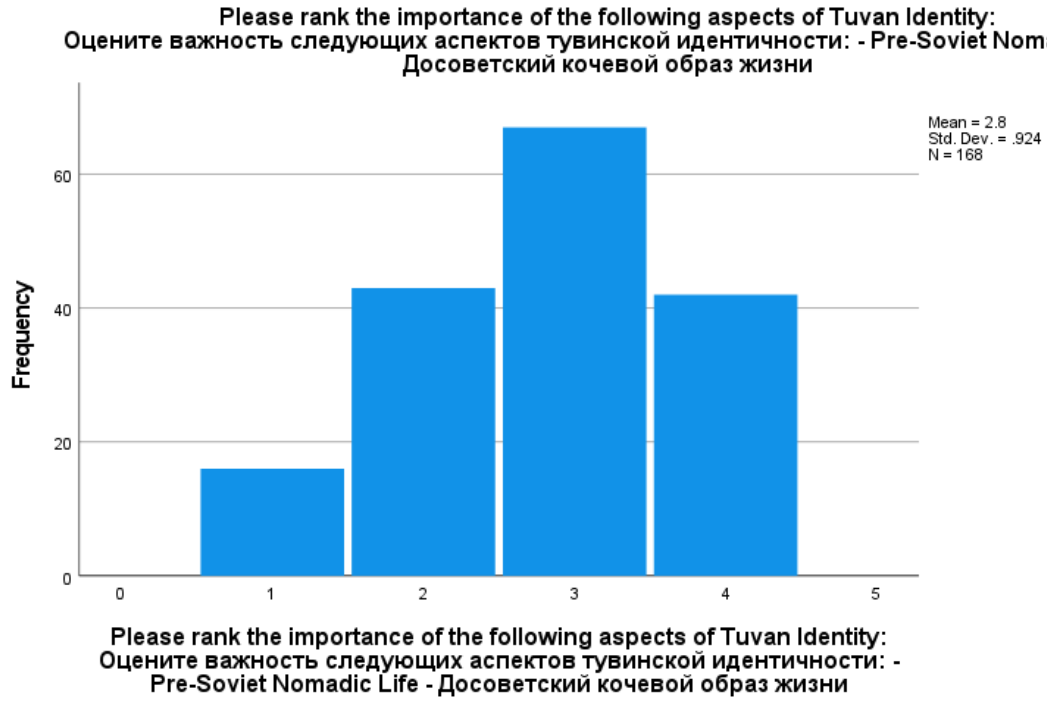
Table 7

Survey Results for Pre-Soviet Nomadic as an Aspect of Modern Tyvan Identity

Please rank the importance of the following aspects of Tuvan Identity: Оцените важность следующих аспектов тувинской идентичности: **Pre-Soviet Nomadic Life - Досоветский кочевой образ жизни**		
	N	%
Not Important - не важный	16	9.5%
Somewhat Important - несколько важно	43	25.6%
Important - важный	67	39.9%
Very Important - очень важный	42	25.0%

Figure 7

Survey Results Bar Graph for Pre-Soviet Nomadic Life as an Aspect of Modern Tyvan Identity



Conclusions

The results show a clear picture to the most important contributing factors in modern Tyvan identity and reaffirm the work of Mongush (2006) and Beahrs (2014). I was not surprised that both music, art and music ranked at the highest as it confirmed my observations and participation in both cultural and daily aspects of life while completing field work. What did come as a surprise was the low ranking of Pre-Soviet Nomadic Culture. So much of what I have observed and participated in during field work in Tyva comes directly from life before joining the Soviet Union. Tyvan vocal music, Tyvan instruments, religion, language, art and regional issues are all in some way related to pastoral nomadic life and all certainly pre-date 1944. I believe that had I used the Tyvan word “Arat”, results may have differed.

Finally, in order to have collected survey results for the qualitative research component of this dissertation, the last question in this initial survey asked the participants if they were willing to answer a longer survey and please provide their email address. This was a non-required question and voluntary. Apart from the email address, no identifying data of the participants were collected and anonymity has been kept secure via the Qualtrics.com website.

Chapter 6

Integrated Descriptive and Qualitative Results

This chapter contains the integrated qualitative results of the mixed methods study conducted to examine the relationship between music education and post-Soviet Tyvan cultural identity. In addition to the qualitative results and discussion, descriptive data results from the Likert Scale rating markers of Tyvan cultural identity will be integrated in the mixed methods convergent model posited by Creswell and Plano Clark (2018). The process used to analyze and code qualitative data from the long form questionnaire involved several steps. It took approximately two weeks to translate forty-four individual twenty-two question surveys from Russian to English.

After going over the survey results by hand, I used descriptive coding for the initial coding. This descriptive coding process is well suited to coding ethnographies and survey data according to Saldaña who writes, “Descriptive coding assigns labels to data to summarize in a word or short phrase – most often a noun – the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data (Saldaña, 2021, pp. 362-363). This method of coding can be useful for the majority of qualitative studies and is an effective methodology for, “beginning qualitative researchers learning how to code data, ethnographies, and studies with a wide variety of data forms.” (Saldaña, 2021, pp. 362-363).

Initial coding took approximately four weeks and resulted in 869 lines of code. These codes were then categorized into aspect of modern Tyvan Identitys that are the six descriptive aspects of modern Tyvan identity (art, music, language, geography, religion and pre-Soviet

nomadic culture) as described in Chapter Five of this study. Using the markers of modern Tyvan identity from chapter five allows for the descriptive data to be effectively integrated (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Results from both initial survey exploring aspects of modern Tyvan identity as well the second long form survey will be included in this chapter along with quotes from individual interviews to demonstrate key aspect of modern Tyvan Identitys and theory. Integration of results from both qualitative and descriptive surveys were used to better explain not only descriptive results, but also validate experiences in my own field work ethnography found in the third chapter of this dissertation. While this is not a complete examination of music education and Tyvan cultural identity, it is the first of its kind and show why music is important to Tyvan cultural identity, how master musicians teach Tyvan music, why they teach Tyvan music, and if Tyvan music is adequately promoted by primary and secondary education in the Republic of Tyva. Please refer to Appendix B for a complete list of the survey questions asked to participants.

Participants

The final question in the initial survey, *"Would you be willing to do an interview over the internet about Tuvan culture and music? If so, please include your name and email address. If not, please just leave this question empty. Thank you."* was a non-required request for further participation in this project. 114 participants from the first descriptive survey (*N = 168)* volunteered to take the 22-question long form survey. The only requirement for the participants in the long form questionnaire, just like the first survey, was that they had to be ethnic Tyvans. After the 22-question questionnaire was developed in Qualtrics, it was promptly emailed to those who requested to participate further. As with the initial survey, participation was voluntary and participants were informed they could stop the questionnaire at any time they wished. After

keeping the questionnaire open for approximately four weeks, forty-four individuals completed and submitted their responses via Qualtrics. At the end of the long form survey there were six additional nonidentifying and voluntary demographic questions requested from the participants. Twenty-nine respondents volunteered their demographic data. Of the twenty-nine responses 41% (*n= 12*) were men and 59% (*n* = 17) were women.

Amongst the voluntary demographic data included a question on profession. 65% of the respondents (*n* = 29) volunteered this information. Choices of profession in the survey included: professional musician, healthcare, legal, retired, secretarial, teacher, university student and other. Respondents were encouraged to select all professions that applied.

While all of the profession data was appreciated and reflected a wide variety of professions, the professional musicians and teachers were the most crucial given that a major goal in this dissertation has been to study the transmission of folk song in Tyva. 34% (*n = 15*) of the total respondents (*N = 44*) answered question number six in the survey that they taught Tyvan music. 6% (*n = 2*) of participants self-identified as teachers, and only one of the two taught Tyvan music. This might be explained by the fact that music education, especially at the primary grades is handled by classroom teachers. 27% (*n = 8*) self-reported to be professional musicians and of that category 50% (*n = 4*) are teachers of Tyvan music as well.

Question 1 "Tell me something about your own musical history":

After translating the survey responses from Russian and Tyvan to English for analysis and coding, the most frequently coded word in question 1 was "ancestors" (*n = 22)*, which in turn was then categorized into the "pre-Soviet nomadic culture" aspect of modern Tyvan Identity (*n= 18*) and "Tyvan music" aspect of modern Tyvan Identity (*n = 4).* The next major code was "natural world" (*n = 17*) which was exclusively categorized into the "pre-Soviet nomadic

culture" aspect of modern Tyvan Identity. "Oral tradition" *(n = 12)* was categorized as "pre-Soviet nomadic culture" (*n = 1*), "Tyvan language" (*n = 2)* and "Tyvan Music" (*n = 9*). "Collective ownership of music" (*n = 10)* was categorized exclusively as "Tyvan Music". "Collective history" (*n = 4*) was categorized into "Tyvan Music" (*n = 3*) and "Pre-Soviet Nomadic Culture" (*n = 1*). "Music at home" (*n = 3*) was categorized into "Tyvan Music" as was "Music in our DNA" (*n = 2).* "Formalize" (*n = 1*), "Use of music" (*n = 1*), and "Modern identity" (*n = 1*) were categorized into "Tyvan Music", while "Culture" (*n = 1*) was categorized into "Pre-Soviet Nomadic Life". Final categorization of the codes resulted in "Pre-Soviet Nomadic Life" (*n = 38*) and "Tyvan Music" (*n=36*) being the largest aspect of modern Tyvan Identitys in this first question and "Tyvan Language" (*n = 2*) the third and final aspect of modern Tyvan Identity the participants discussed.

The aspect of modern Tyvan identity that emerged from question one surprised me. I assumed "Tyvan Music" would have been a primary aspect of modern Tyvan Identity as Tyvan music is the focus of this study. While question one asked the participants to tell me something about their own musical history, participants nearly universally gave answers pertaining to a collective history of Tyvan music that dated to the pre-Soviet era. Tyvan vocal and instrumental music are viewed, by the participants, as a gift from "ancestors" as are the "national instruments" (doshpuluur, igil, khomus, byzanchii, chadagan, kengirge etc.) that are "passed down from generation to generation".

While attending musical performances in Tyva, this oral tradition and respect for ancestors was prevalent. When performing a solo bayan and kargyraa piece in his office at the Tyvan Cultural Center during my July 2018 field work, director Igor Koshkendey, noted to me that while the song was his own composition, it was in the *style* of Oidupaa. Due to his criminal

history, Oidupaa and his music have been, and still can considered quite controversial in Tyva. In the 1990s it would have been a major faux pas. Slowly, Oidupaa, at least the music and musical reputation, have been rehabilitated. Nonetheless, out of respect for the man and music, Koshkendey acknowledged him.

In addition to this collective musical history, a code "collective ownership" (*n = 10*) emerged from the data. I feel like this collective ownership of music can be related back to ancestors and nomadic life in the pre-Soviet era. Participants described Tyvan music as, "our music" and a "gift from our ancestors". I have interpreted ancestors as more of a general concept than pointing to a specific familial relative. Furthermore, participants also noted that Tyvan music needed to be collectively "protected" and should be collectively "respected" amongst the Tyvan people.

Participants also discussed the "interconnected" relationship between the natural world, the Tyvan people and Tyvan music share. To this end, participants talked frequently about aspects of nomadic life including, livestock, shepherds and wild animals. Music is, according to participant 44, "connected with history and traditional life of Tyvan people" and can also "describe beautiful landscapes." Participant 28 summarized the history of Tyvan music, respect for ancestors, and the relationship Tyvan music shares with the natural world by providing a brief folk tale. The story, according to participant 28, tells that, "The bird song flew in the sky, and over the endless steppe of Tyva descended to the earth. Therefore, skilled singers and songwriters live here." Data in question 1 show that the history of music in Tyva is looked at from a shared or collective perspective, is a gift from the ancestors and is closely connected to life in the natural world during the pre-Soviet era.

Question 2 "What is the first time you heard khöömei?"

Participant responses to this question fell into two dominant codes. The first being "childhood" (*n = 30*) and secondly, "music at home" *(n = 15*). While initially I considered coding "music at home" as "childhood", participants did not specifically mention childhood. Rather, participants noted that their grandfather (participants 14 and 31) or another relative including a father, brother or cousin (participants 6 and 8). Participants (*n = 4)* also discussed that Tyvan music in their blood and was coded as "music in our DNA". "School curriculum" and "formative experience with prominent musicians" and going "beyond the Sayan" were less frequently discussed (*n = 2)*. Finally, participants discussed "connection with the land" (*n = 1)*, "pastoralism" (*n = 1)* and that Tyvan "music not exclusively for trained musicians" (*n = 1).* Unsurprisingly, the two aspect of modern Tyvan Identitys that emerged from the data were "Tyvan Music" (*n = 56)* and "Pre-Soviet nomadic life" (*n = 2*), both being markers of modern Tyvan identity per the descriptive results discussed in Chapter 5.

Question 1 established an important connection between Tyvan music, pre-Soviet nomadic life and the fact that Tyvan music is still very much an oral tradition. When asked about the first time the participants recalled hearing Tyvan khöömei it was in their early childhood, at home from a relative, always male and consistently a grandfather. Not a single participant mentioned hearing Tyvan khöömei from a female member of the family, though I suspect this will change in the coming years as there are now several well known female khöömeizhi including Choduraa Tumat, Aydysma Koshkendey and Sholbana Belek-ool.

The connection to the music is so intertwined with modern Tyvan identity that participant 14 responded they heard Tyvan music, "before I was in this world, I heard because we have blood (sic)." Participant 8 noted that, "Any inhabitant of Tyva cannot be unaware of it (Tyvan music)." Further, participant 8 discussed only beginning to listen to and sing Tyvan music once

they had gone beyond the Sayan (Mongush, 2006) for education. Specifically, participant 8 informed wrote, “I began to miss my homeland and began to listen to our folk songs.” Participant 1 noted they first heard the music from, “birth” and that Tyvans are, “born with the music.” This is consistent with the folk tale as discussed in question 1 that the bird songs in ancient times floated down to the people of the Steppe.

Tyvan music is also present in elementary school curriculum, to what extent the music is part of the curriculum is unknown as participants did not elaborate. Participants 4 and 6 only made mention of hearing it in “elementary school” in the case of participant 4 and more specifically the, “fourth grade”, in the case of participant 6. Participant 14 also discussed two formative experiences with Tyvan music at a young age. The noted khöömeizhi Vladimir Oidupaa, as discussed in question 1, lived in their village and would sing often. Also, in participant 14’s childhood the popular “Tyva Ensemble” also performed in their village.

I suspect that soon the number of these formative experiences will begin to increase. While not every child has the benefit of growing up in a musical household, or with a relative that engages them musically, the Tyvan Ministry of Culture has been opening regional cultural centers to expose more Tyvans to their cultural heritage. In 2021 regional culture centers opened in Murgu-Aksy in the Mongun Taiga Region, Hovo-Aksy, Sut-Khol, Ovur Kozhun, Khemchik, and Cherbi. These regional cultural centers will host prominent musicians, ensembles, in-person instruction as well as video lessons via the internet connected to the new International Khöömei Academy located in Kyzyl. In addition to the regional cultural centers, each May, the Tyvan Cultural Center in Kyzyl hosts the Saradak children’s khöömei festival and contest. Regardless of official school curriculum within the Republic of Tyva, I am convinced that these cultural

centers will not only ensure continuity of Tyvan music, but aid in growth and popularity amongst students.

Question 3 "Did you train in other music besides Tyvan music?"

Two major codes emerged from this question. The first was "foreign music" (*n = 24)* and "exclusively Tyvan music" (*n = 29)*. Participants next discussed "formal education" (*n = 8)* and "foreign instruments" (*n = 5).* While not discussing musical training, participants also used this question to discuss the "function of music" (*n = 5)* in Tyvan life. As with question three, "school curriculum" was discussed sparingly (*n = 2).* Finally, "music in our DNA" (*n = 1)*, and "national instruments" (*n = 1)* were coded. From this data, a new aspect of modern Tyvan Identity outside of the original survey appeared in the form of "foreign music" (*n = 30)* followed by "Tyvan music" (*n = 17)* and a final new aspect of modern Tyvan Identity "music education" (*n = 10)* emerged.

While I was unsurprised that "music education" emerged as a new aspect of modern Tyvan Identity, I did not anticipate non-Tyvan music being distinguished by participants as "foreign music". Mongush (2006) identifies this type of distinction as a "barrier formula" (p. 289) separating Tyvan and non-Tyvan concepts. Given the geographic isolation and that the population of Tyva is extremely homogenous, I should have anticipated this bifurcation of music. Despite the idea of "crossing the Sayan" for education, Kyzyl has an arts college on Ulitsa Lenina, near the Tyvan Cultural Center. In addition to Tyvan khöömei and Tyvan instruments, students can also study western instruments, voice, and the art music cannon. In many respects, this mirrors the bi-musicality Hood (1960) described with Imperial Court Musicians in Tokyo being master performers and practitioners of both western classical music

and Gagaku court music as they were required to perform both with mastery for the Japanese Imperial Court (p. 55).

In addition to the ensembles at the Kyzyl Arts College, the Tyvan Wind Band exists and performs the standard wind band repertoire as well as folk song arrangements and new works by Tyvan composers. The Tyvan Wind Band also breaks into smaller chamber groups as well as a jazz ensemble. Beyond the concert hall, the Tyvan Wind Band also regularly performs mounted on horseback for various parades including the May 8th "Victory Day" which commemorates the end of the Second World War.

While completing field work in Tyva, I also met members of the Kyzyl symphony orchestra and a new opera company that was being formed as of 2017. In many ways these early encounters shattered my naïve romanticism of Tyvan culture and music in Tyva. Rock and roll and fusion bands also exist including Yat-Kha, led by Albert Kuvezin who was also a founding member of Huun Huur Tu, and the rock band Yer is led by current Huun Huur Tu member and master Tyvan musician Radik Tyulush. Fusion group Hartyga met and formed at the Kyzyl Arts College and rehearsed after studying Tyvan music. Finally, the new percussion ensemble, Medee Khaan, led by female percussionist Bailak Mongush performs a wide variety of modern percussion music, traditional Tyvan songs and recently have had successfully reviewed concerts presenting animé music. Since my first time in the field, Tyva is also seeing a burgeoning hip-hop and electronica music scene with artists incorporating Tyvan melodies, khöömei and Tyvan language into their music.

Tyvan music ensembles have also leaned into foreign music by way of collaborative projects. The late Kongar-ool Ondar collaborated with acts ranging from Willie Nelson to Bela Fleck. Huun Huur Tu has collaborated with diverse artists including Frank Zappa and the Kronos

Quartet. Alash has also collaborated frequently with Bela Fleck as well as members of the Baltimore hip hop community. It is important to realize that regardless of the geographic isolation of the Tyvan Republic and participants establishing what is Tyvan and what is foreign, there was no detected animosity to foreign music or bi-musicality. In the future, I would be quite interested in studying bi-musicality in Tyva and there is space for such work in the literature.

Question 4 "Where did you learn Tyvan music?"

Participants responded that learning Tyvan music is still predominately an "oral tradition" (*n = 25*) and minimally learned via "formal education" (*n = 6*). Music learning occurred, at least for the participants in this study, "at home" (*N = 5)* and that "music is not exclusive to trained musicians" (*n = 5*). Leaning into Tyvan music being an oral tradition, again, participants responded that "music is in our DNA" (*n = 3)* and comes from "ancestors" (*n = 1*). Participants also made sure recognize their teacher, the late "Kongar-ool Ondar" (*n = 2*). The dominant aspect of modern Tyvan Identity related to descriptive results that emerged in this question was "Tyvan music" (*n = 64*). Also, tied to the descriptive data, "Pre-Soviet nomadic life" was also discussed by participants (*n = 2*).

Participant 7 had an interesting response to how they learned Tyvan music, "I basically studied on my own, as I was squeezed out of not knowing, and that's why when I went as a shepherd in nature, I practiced khoomei." The Kyzyl Arts College was discussed as a place to learn Tyvan music (*n = 4*) and participants recognized their instructors including Chorduraa Tumat, Mongun-ool Ondar and Kongar-ool Ondar. In the future this style of learning Tyvan music may increase, but I believe that for the time being, the manner in which participant 7 learned to sing khöömei, in some *aal* working as a shepherd reflects the way that most individuals in Tyva are learning their khöömei.

In my own field work, I was told the best way to learn Tyvan music was to be alone in nature and listening to the sounds of the wind, the rivers and the birds. Casually asking performers at the khöömei contest where they learned often elicited responses of alone in nature with an igil. While attending the 2017 Naadym festivities outside of Kyzyl on the steppe, the wind began to pick up. A member of the Tyvan National Orchestra pulled me aside and told me that the sound of the wind was khöömei. Other instances in the field, a prominent Tyvan musician and close friend had me bend my ear to the river at Bii-Xem to hear the rhythm. This, I was explained to, was borbangnadyr. Through this process I have constantly worried that I was being told what I wanted to hear, but after serious reflection on my time in both Tyva and Mongolia, I firmly believe the answers both in the field and via Qualtrics were genuine. I do not think there is a correct bird, river, wind or mountain to listen to, but rather it is the act of going into nature and connecting with ancestors, animals and the pre-Soviet nomadic times that is crucial to learning Tyan music.

Question 5 "How did you learn Tyvan music?"

Participants predominately described learning Tyvan music by ear and was coded as "Aural tradition" (*n = 65*). Exclusively learning via "Notation" (*n = 5*) appears to be rare, according to participants as was a combination of learning "both by rote and notation" (*n = 4*). Participant 11 noted that an, "academic study of voice helped resonators, breathing and the body." To that end, this response was coded as "western style of learning" (*n = 1*) given the references to anatomy and vocal pedagogy. Finally, as these responses were specifically about the process of learning Tyvan music, they were aspect of modern Tyvan Identityd as "Tyvan music" (*n = 72*), one of the descriptive aspects of modern Tyvan identity.

I was not surprised by the answers in this question given that question four and five are so closely related. Of the participants that chose to answer this question, fifteen self-reported that they were teachers of Tyvan music. Only three participants that teach Tyvan music were taught via notation and two participants that did not self-report as teachers of Tyvan music learned via notation. While there are certainly printed collections of Tyvan music, notably the seminal work of Aksenov (1964), it is possible to infer from the data that Tyvan music is still very much an aural/oral tradition.

In my own field work, I was never taught by notation any style of khöömei or Tyvan instrument. While having what was called "practice" with my mentors from the Alash Ensemble, the three khöömeizhi requested I demonstrate a sygyt, khöömei or kargyraa. All three listened intently, then demonstrated the styles for me to echo back to them. This went on for the better part of an hour each "practice". The same can be said for my studies in igil, doshpuluur and chanzy, everything was learned by rote. While it is beneficial for the preservationists to record and notate Tyvan songs, notation simply cannot capture or represent the sounds of the rivers, mountains and animals of Tyva. I believe that in the future, the music will continue to be taught primarily as an oral/aural tradition.

Question 6 "Do You Teach Tyvan Music"

Question 6 asked participants to self-report if they taught Tyvan music in any capacity. Of the participants that chose to answer the question fifteen (*n = 15*), indicated that they did teach Tyvan music. Twenty-three (*n = 23*) replied they did not teach Tyvan music and six (*n = 6*) participants left the answer blank as all answers were voluntary in the survey. The following questions numbers 28, 7 and 8 were asked only to participants who answered "yes" to question six. Qualtrics labeled question 28 as such because I added the question at the last minute before

sending the survey out and therefore it was the 28th question that had been programmed into the survey software.

Question 28 "Do you teach by rote or notation and why do you teach?"

Of all the education based questions in this survey, this might be the most important question as it addresses both how and why people in Tyva teach Tyvan music. First, Tyvan music is an aural/oral tradition and participants responses were coded as "no notation" (*n = 6*) and "use notation" (*n = 1*). Data continue to support that Tyvan music is still primarily transmitted orally/aurally from teacher to student. Prominent khöömeizhi in Tyva will perform a song in the style of "Oidupaa or Kongar-ool Ondar etc.". The question that needs to be asked is oral/aural tradition enough to preserve and promote folk art? Honestly, given the political situation in Russia and Tyva, I cannot say. As Mr. Putin moves to create a "one Russia", I contemplate on the fate of the lost cultures and languages of our own indigenous peoples here in the United States of America and fear for indigenous cultures in Russia. Personally, I believe that a collection of folk songs that are notated and accompanied with audio and visual recordings certainly would not hurt the future of Tyvan music. Such an undertaking should be done by a Tyvan musician and not a westerner if possible due to their inherent cultural knowledge that a westerner simply does not have.

The second major part of this question looks at *why* the participants teach Tyvan music. Predominately, their answers were coded as "responsibility" (*n* = 10). Due to the prevalence of the sense of responsibility teachers feel, I am also including the term *responsibility* as a new aspect of modern Tyvan Identity that has emerged from the data separate of the original descriptive survey data. The idea of "responsibility" was addressed in several fashions. Participant 12 noted that they, "teach because our children will pass music to their children" not

wanting, “oral folk art to be interrupted” and they feel, “obliged to pass to next generation (sic).” Participant 6 teaches because they, “want future generations to (sic) know our culture and khöömei” and Participant 27 wants to, “pass to younger generation and friends my skills” in the, “unique art of khöömei.” Participant 4 indicated they teach to, “share experience” and “share knowledge”. Finally, Participant 21 shared their sense of responsibility saying they, “teach with enthusiasm and hope.”

As observed in my own field work, there is a committed contingent of culture bearers who have devoted their lives to preserving, promoting and growing Tyvan music. Casual conversations around a fire in some *aal* or even the Tyvan Cultural Center in Kyzyl also revealed this sense of responsibility, frankly an urgency. What do the khöömeizhi know and are not comfortable sharing that is cause for urgency? I would assume going against a “united Russia” cannot be necessarily good for their cause. These informal chats in the field revealed that in the early 1990s right after the USSR collapsed it was “cool” for kids to be speaking Tyvan, singing khöömei and even men sporting the traditional *cui* hair style (a long pony tail and shaved sides).

If Tyvan khöömei were unaffected by 21st century colonialism and Russification would teachers discuss with me the *responsibility* they feel to preserve and transmit their khöömei? I honestly do not know. Compared to kai from the Altai or khai from Khakassia, Tyvan khöömei is in a better state of being a living tradition, but not to the level of say Mongolian khöömii just across the southern Tyvan border. Mongolian khöömii has benefited from support from national and regional government entities.

If a similar survey were to be given to American K-12 music educators, I would hypothesize here that the sense of *responsibility* for the continuity of musical traditions would not be as high as the Tyvans. I do believe that *responsibility* would be prevalent amongst

indigenous and underrepresented musical traditions and educators. Western teachers certainly have the luxury of not having the fate of their medium (wind band etc.) on their shoulders. Going forward, I believe a similar study amongst indigenous and underrepresented educators in the United States would yield similar results as the Tyvans and could serve as a building block to better support not only these educators but the living musical traditions they represent.

Question 7 "Is it important that people teach Tyvan music?"

I was certain the majority answer to this question would be a resounding "yes" as it was specifically asked to teachers of Tyvan music, and I was correct. Again, both the code "responsibility" (*n = 10)* and aspect of modern Tyvan Identity "responsibility" (*n = 9)* were dominant, but this was expected. Participant 7 noted, "khöömei is the first language of humanity and (sic) my mission to convey to people this treasure that was originally given to us by our ancestors." Participant 12 stated that teaching Tyvan music was important so, "people distinguish our music from others." I had hoped to have more complete statements similar to those given from Participants 7 and 12, however the rest answered with generic "yes", "important" or "very important", but not why they felt the way they did. Had I been in Kyzyl doing these interviews in person, obviously, I would have next asked "why", but again, given that travel has been impossible due to Covid19 and political squabbles between our governments, these are the data that I must work with.

Here, I would like to delve more into the response from Participant 12 who was concerned with people being able to distinguish Tyvan khöömei from the other variants found in the Altai-Sayan region of Inner Asia. While ownership and appropriation is not necessarily the purpose of this survey, I do believe it is important to discuss. As previously discussed in Chapter 3, after having spent time in Tyva, listening to and speaking with Tyvan musicians, it appears

that the Tyvans are not interested in exclusive ownership or who "invented" khöömei. Rather, the feeling is that they are not allowed at the table, and want to have a seat and their variant of khöömei be recognized as uniquely Tyvan in the larger Altai-Sayan region.

Question 8 "How do you feel when you perform or teach Tyvan music?"

Unsurprisingly the idea of "responsibility" (*n = 9*) appeared most frequently in the coding process. Following responsibility is a "sense of Tyvan identity" (*n = 8*) and finally "ancestors" (*n = 1*). Participant 11's answers dealt with both *ancestors* and *responsibility*. Specifically, they stated, "through my voice, the voices of our ancestors sound." Here this can be related to the descriptive "pre-Soviet nomadic life" marker of modern Tyvan identity. Participant 11 also explains their responsibility in teaching Tyvan music because, "teaching is for me help, help to people who are trying to find themselves." I chose to specifically put this into the *responsibility* aspect of modern Tyvan Identity which has emerged in the data, but not part of the original markers of modern Tyvan identity as discussed in Chapter 5.

Participant 17 tells us they feel the responsibility of teaching Tyvan music, "So that generations do not forget their native culture, rituals, language, mentality." This answer points back to underlying appropriation issues that the Tyvans are experiencing within the Altai-Sayan as well as an increasingly globalized and uniculturalized world. The geographic barrier formula that Mongush (2006) describes may not sufficiently preserve and protect indigenous Tyvan culture in the 21st century. There is clear need, hopefully done by scholars inside Tyva, to produce studies and recordings that differentiate Tyvan khöömei from the rest of the Altai-Sayan. As an etic scholar of Tyvan music, I simply do not have the emic knowledge of the music and culture that every single ethnic Tyvan has. In future studies, I would be glad to partner with Tyvan scholars on such a project.

Participant 21 had the most pragmatic of answers. While coded as *responsibility*, the responsibility they felt was due to teaching and performing Tyvan music, "is my job" and "I make income from it." I was glad to get this answer, because of the unmediated honesty. Tyva and Tyvan music do not exist in a bubble untouched by the realities of modern life and having to do what we all do – keep a roof over our heads and provide food for our families. Participant 21 probably reflects the opinions of many teacher/musicians in Tyva, and might reveal that other participants, given the responsibility they have as musical culture bearers, felt compelled internally to give a response that better suits their interests in maintaining a living musical culture. The reader and I cannot blame the participants in the least bit if this is the case. With American music educators, the fate of the wind band does not sit on the shoulders of a handful of teachers as is the case with Tyvan khöömei. Going forward, the financial aspects of being a musical culture bearer in the globalized world would be useful, however, that is not in the purview of this study.

Question 9 "How do you feel about Tyvan music?"

Questions 9 through 22 were asked to all participants regardless of if they teach Tyvan music or not. As suspected, all of the participants answered Question 9 with a positive response. In terms of coding, the top code is "respect" (*n = 8*) followed closely by "positive" (*n = 6*) and "good" (*n = 6*). Participants also equally discussed "music in our DNA" (*n = 5*) and "love" (*n = 5*). "Function" (*n = 2*) of Tyvan music was discussed, however I believe this has to do with misunderstanding the question and not my translation of English to Russian in the Qualtrics survey. Participants also discussed "pre-Soviet nomadic life", "neutral feeling", "cultural appropriation" and "modern use" equally (*n = 1).* Finally, integrating these codes into aspect of

modern Tyvan Identity based markers of modern Tyvan identity, the data fits neatly into "Tyvan music" (*n = 30*) and "Pre-Soviet nomadic life" (*n = 6)*.

While the function of Tyvan music was discussed by only Participant 9, their answer is worth exploring. They indicated that Tyvan music had function beyond aesthetics. Specifically, Tyvan music can, "help Tyvans who have financial downturn," and "help Tyvans who have spiritual downturn." In the case of financial downturn, this makes sense as there is a bourgeoning interest in Tyvan khöömei and Tyvan national instruments. To that end, yes, Tyvans can make income teaching lessons over the internet. As to the spiritual downturn, one of the important markers of modern Tyvan identity is religion. Given that Tyvan khöömei is closely associated with nomadic life, including religious traditions, it makes sense that Participant 9 feels that appealing to this pride in nomadic life might help an individual find themselves.

Cultural appropriation was discussed by Participant 12 who wrote, "I want people to not misappropriate our Tyvan traditional songs." Again here, I go back to conversations with musicians in the field indicating that the Tyvans are not concerned with ownership khöömei, but rather want to be recognized as having a unique style. While not specifically addressing appropriation issues, Participant 43 says of Tyvan music, "It is beautiful and rich heritage of my people."

Here I also need to address the code "music in our DNA". Throughout this project, both in the field and via surveys, Tyvans have emphasized their innate musical ability. Participant 3 writes, "She's in my genes." Participant 24 replied that, "a Tyvan man without singing is like a bird without wings." Participant 16 notes, "When I listen to Tyvan music feel (sic) strong connection to my homeland." In future survey questions, the musical DNA of the Tyvan people will be addressed further. The balance of responses were one or two words discussing the

participants' "love" or "respect" of Tyvan music, but not why they love and respect the music. Had I been able to conduct in person interviews, I could have probed deeper into these feelings. However, it is clear by the responses given in question 9 that Tyvans have a deep connection to their music. In every response to this questions there was a feeling of pride, respect or love of khöömei. Could the participants be telling me what I want to hear? Of course, but again, given my field work and first-hand experience with Tyvan music, I believe the answers to be genuine.

Question 10 "Is Tyvan music regimented or evolving?"

What is the emic position on the state of Tyvan music? I had hoped to see results indicative of a culture evolving and not static. Results confirm what I witnessed and participated in during field work in Tyva. If there is to be continuity of minority indigenous folk music traditions, I believe they necessarily have to evolve or risk becoming a museum piece. In some ways, this is why the Beatles saw such meteoric success in their career. Namely, every album was radically different and constantly evolving. In Tyvan musical culture, based on my experiences in Tyva, Tyvan music is a big tent. There is esteem and respect for Chirgilchin, Huun-Huur Tu and the Tyva Ensemble maintaining tradition, while at the same time Alash, Khöömei Beat and Oduchu are pushing and changing the boundaries of Tyvan khöömei.

Results of the survey show the majority of participants indicate the music is "evolving" (*n = 25*). There were no responses by the participants that indicated the music was regimented, static or not evolving. Participants further indicated a sense of "responsibility" (*n = 4)* for the preservation and continuity of Tyvan khöömei. Data shows that "NGOs" (*n = 2)* and "globalization" (*n = 2)* are having positive impact on Tyvan khöömei. Finally, participants reflected on "pre-Soviet nomadic life" (*n = 2*) having an impact on Tyvan khöömei as well as keeping the music alive and evolving to ensure "continuity of culture" (*n = 2)*. In terms of the

descriptive data collected examining makers of modern Tyvan identity, the coded answers are aspect of modern Tyvan Identityd as “Tyvan Music” (*n = 34*) and “pre-Soviet nomadic life” (*n = 3)*.

I found it quite interesting that two participants chose this question to address continuity of culture. Participant 28 wrote that, “Our music has been with us since ancient times and will never die as long as our people live.” Participant 12 indicated that in Tyva, “youth are fond of Tyvan music.” As our globalized society moves further towards a musical monocultural, it was heartening to read that Tyvan youth have an interest in their own culture’s music in addition to what I believe to be a globalized musical monoculture. In the future, I would like to talk to high school aged pupils in Tyva to better understand their feelings and relationship with Tyvan khöömei.

Participants also discussed the role of NGOs and globalization in the continued evolution of Tyvan khöömei. I was surprised that globalization was deemed a positive for Tyvan music. Participant 27 wrote, “People all over the world study Tyvan khöömei,” and Participant 43 believes Tyvan khöömei is, “evolving because it is being exported.” To this end, NGOs within Tyva are supporting the study and export of folk song. Participant 43 writes that the, “Tyvan Cultural Center, and (sic) International Khöömei Academy do a great job as cultural policy makers and promoters of Tyvan music.” Participant 16 also discusses the IKA noting that recently, “the International Khöömei Academy opened in Kyzyl.”

The IKA, located on the third floor of the Tyvan Cultural Center at No. 7 Ulitsa Lenina, Kyzyl, are in their first year (2021-2022) of online lessons as well as focusing on becoming a global repository for Tyvan khöömei research. The IKA maintains a research library with sound, video and written resources including the first recording of Tyvan khöömei which was a

kargyraa solo recorded in Khemchik on July 13, 1909 by researcher Andrei Anokhin (1869-1931). This dissertation, per their request, will also be translated into Tyvan upon completion, printed and stored at the IKA.

For their own part, the Tyvan Cultural Center (TCC) has been a driving force in the world of not only Tyvan khöömei, but Tyvan language, art, literature, and sport. Led by Igor Koshkendey, the TCC sponsors dozens of events each year not only in Kyzyl, but throughout the kozhuns (counties/provinces) as well. The TCC is also a constant force in cultural education hosting pupils in their theatre for events as well as sponsoring cultural events in schools throughout Tyva. Tyvan khöömei is not an endangered music due in large part to the tireless efforts of the employees at the TCC.

Responsibility is also discussed by participants. Participant 26 stated, “we (sic) must preserve her individuality - which is characteristic of Tyvan music.” Participant 4 writes, “At the moment, I believe, Tyvan music is still at the stage of preservation and revival. The next step is development.” Participant 12 answered, “Oo! Tyvan music is developing very much! Nowadays Tyvan youth is very fond of Tyvan music. And what is good, they are supported by parents and leisure establishments of our republic.” In addition to the preservation aspects, Participant 12 gives us the sense that starting at the home and cultural institutions found in local in Tyvan cities, the music and interest in the music is being supported.

Finally, while the majority of participants wrote that they believe the music is evolving and developing, the answers were “yes” with no further explanation. Had it been possible to conduct in person interviews, the follow up question to the single word answer would be, “can you tell me how you think the music is evolving/developing?” I think that the prevailing attitude, at least in terms of the data collected, is that Tyvan music is not in a state of stagnation. Going

forward, future studies exploring the exact measures being taken, in addition to natural evolution of music, to keep Tyvan khöömei a living tradition would be valuable.

Question 11 "What is authentic Tyvan music?"

As I awaited data to come in via Qualtrics, I tried not to assume what participants would respond with. Results were unsurprising given that the Tyvan Republic is a homogenous state and that the survey went out to only ethnic Tyvans. According to the data collected, participants considered "Tyvan vocal music (khöömei, sygyt, kargyraa)" (*n = 17*) to be authentic Tyvan music, followed closely by "folk songs" (*n = 13)*. Folk songs were differentiated from Tyvan vocal music in that the responses did not specifically mention the singing styles including khöömei, sygyt and kargyraa. Participants also discussed in their responses that the use of "national instruments (doshpuluur, igil, chanzy etc.)" (*n = 5*) was an important factor in defining authentic Tyvan music as was the use of *Tyvan language* (*n = 3*). "Folklore" (*n = 3*) also appeared as an important definer of authentic Tyvan music. Participants also discussed a specific "function" (*n = 2)* of authentic Tyvan music. Finally, participants wrote about "pre-Soviet nomadic life" (*n = 1*), "preservation" (*n = 1),* the need to have "flexibility" (*n = 1)* in defining authentic Tyvan music and the fact that authentic Tyvan music must be an "oral tradition" (*n = 1*).

Looking back to descriptive data in Chapter Five of modern Tyvan identity, "Tyvan Music" (*n = 38)* appeared as the dominant aspect of modern Tyvan Identity. This was not a surprise given the question deals specifically with what is authentic Tyvan music. Responses showed that "pre-Soviet nomadic life" (*n = 5*) was slightly more important than "Tyvan language" (*n = 3*) in their definitions as to what "authentic" Tyvan music is. Finally, the aspect

of modern Tyvan Identity of "responsibility" (*n = 1)* also appeared, but not to the levels it has in previous questions.

Authenticity is certainly subjective, though most participants shared a common idea of what is authentic Tyvan music. Participant 43, while not a teacher or performer of music, shared their thoughts on definitions changing and having to be flexible in what authentic Tyvan music is. Specifically, "I think, authenticity is a flexible concept. In a case of Tyvan music, I believe that authenticity is not following established (recorded) canons, rather it is an ability to perform within Tyvan musical aesthetics." What then are the musical aesthetics of Tyvan music? Are they the combination of timbres from khöömei styles and instruments derived from horizontal timbral listening as described by Levin and Süzükei (2006)? The aesthetic also might be the sonic mimesis (Levin & Süzükei, 2006). In other words does the sygyt in the song *Alash Khem* truly mimic a bird flying above the river?

Though I spent much time in the field as an observing perfomer, I still will never have the emic knowledge to define these aesthetics. I also think the flexibility here might include contemporary popular ensembles like Yer, Oduchu, Khöömei Beat and the hip-hop artist Gina Ondar. All of these performers sing in Tyvan language, incorporate Tyvan melodies, Tyvan instruments, timbres and khöömei. Participant 11 might disagree with this assertation as they believe that, "if performance uses a guitar or European harmonies, then this is a deviation from tradition."

Like any folk music, I believe there is a wide interpretation on what makes the music "authentic". Beyond basic sounds and the incorporation of non-Tyvan instruments, the definition authenticity will vary by age and generation. While in Kyzyl in 2017, I attended a performance in Arat Square by the DJ and hip hop artist "DJ Taiga". The performance was decidedly

European style electronica with enough lights and speakers to stage a Kiss concert. Upon listening closer, DJ Taiga rapped exclusively in Tyvan language and incorporated the khorekteer vocal technique and sublime kargyraa. I would later understand he is a master khöömeizhi. The audience, all under 25 years old and predominately teenagers, both boys and girls, rapped with him in Tyvan, danced like they were in a London night club and responded wildly to his khöömei styles under the soft purple Siberian evening sky. To this audience, DJ Taiga was without a doubt authentic Tyvan music that was meaningful and useful in their lives.

If I were forced to define authentic Tyvan music, and I tread lightly here with all due respect, based on my observations in the field and via the questionnaire there are a few commonalities that contribute to a shared concept of authentic Tyvan music. First and foremost, the music must contain khöömei styles and use the Tyvan language. National instruments may be used as can folk melodies, but they are not as essential as khöömei. Purists might exclude western instruments and harmonies, but modern ensembles have embraced and adapted western instruments and harmonies into Tyvan music. Vladimir Oidupaa, referenced by many participants in this study, incorporated the bayan (Russian button accordion) into his khöömei kargyraa and now in Tyva "Oidupaa Style" or "In the style of Oidupaa) is widely accepted as authentic Tyvan music.

I have had the great fortune to experience both traditional and contemporary Tyvan musics and music making. A few days after dancing into the evening in Arat Square with a post-Soviet generation of Tyvans, I found myself south of Kyzyl at Lake Khadyn. After a nice lunch of bread, cokes and sausage, a doshpuluur was brought out to sing. As the black eagles soared over us looking for scraps of food, we sang a few songs from what I call the "standard repertoire" of Tyvan music. After Ezir Kara and Aa-Shuu Dekei-Oo came the eagle dancing, a

round of khuresh wrestling and a swim in the knee deep lake, all the while a stereo blanketed the shores of the lake with the latest album from Alash. It seems that there is a wide definition of what characterizes authentic Tyvan music, but the common denominators are khöömei and Tyvan language.

Question 12 "What is the place/role of music in Tyva?"

In doctoral programs students read and sythesize untold pages of books and articles. Wade (2013) so articulates that, "music is made meaningful and useful by people across the world each day" (p. 1). This may have been the most thought provoking idea in my course work. To that end, I began to wonder about the role of music in modern Tyva. Did the Tyvans view music as a financial export, something still used in animal herding and husbandry, a living tradition or artifact of a bygone era? Further, is music the correct term, knowing that in the West we often refer to music as a noun and a verb to describe a product and behavior. I wondered if Tyva had been thoroughly Russified to the point of adopting the Western concept of music as well. Overwhelmingly, participants responded to the effect of music is the "most important part of our culture" (*n = 29*). Participants further discussed "ownership" (*n = 2*) and "globalization" (*n = 1*). Finally, when integrating the qualitative and descriptive data (markers of Modern Tyvan identity) we see the major aspect of modern Tyvan Identity of these responses pointing to "Tyvan music" (*n = 38*).

I cannot make the inference from these data that *all* Tyvans view music as the most important part of their culture, it is clear from the responses gathered that to understand modern Tyvan identity, it is necessary to understand the relationship the Tyvans have with music. Participant 26 tell us that, "Tyvan music is one of the unifying components of the Tyvan people, their pride. Khöömei is a brand of Tyva." The last sentence is very interesting. They responded,

“Хөөмей - бренд Тувы” (khöömei – brend Tyva) which directly translates to “Khöömei – brand of Tyva”. This can also be understood that khöömei, in the eyes of participant 26, is a symbol of Tyva and the Tyvan people.

Participant 9 sees music in a broader frame of daily Tyvan life noting that, “I think it plays the one of the most important roles because Tyvan people are not so successful in economy, safety, education etc, but it has strong cultural traditions (and Tyvan music is included).” Here they bring realities about Tyva to the forefront. I am honored they felt trusted me with their thoughts on major issues facing the Tyvan people. Tyva is the poorest region of Russia, crime is a major problem within the republic, and similar to the United States, areas that are economically disadvantaged also often time lack educational opportunities that more affluent areas have. In my own teaching experience at home, I work in the poorest congressional district in the state of New York where the average family of four makes under $18,000 a year, yet from the top floor of school, we can look west to Manhattan and see buildings where people have bought second or even third homes in excess of $100 million. If I may paraphrase Marx (1867) it is easy to see poverty In the midst of plenty. I bring this up because I do not want to only identify Tyva as being economically disadvantaged. In my own field work, I have witnessed the economic situation in Tyva. Based on experience in the field, conversations with Tyvan colleagues and what is embodied in the Tyvan people, Tyva is culturally wealthy.

Participant 24 discussed music outside of the concert hall and reaffirmed what I witnessed both in Tyva and Mongolia. They note that the role music in Tyva is, “the most important place (sic). No event is complete without a song.” While in Mongolia, people gave songs as a gift. What surprised me more was, in Mongolia, there was a standard repertoire complete with harmony parts for folk tunes that were sung after a meal or around a campfire. My

hosts in Mongolia confirmed my suspicion that the formalized nature of the songs came from the socialist period in the 20th century when the country underwent a "modernization". This resulted in standardization, notation and publication of folk songs, but not wholesale murder that occurred under Mao and Stalin in their countries respectively.

This was also the case in Tyva and there was always a song. Not a day passed when I was not singing or playing. While the tunes were not as formalized as their Mongol cousins a few hundred miles to the south, the Tyvans instead sang what I call the "Huun-Huur Tu" standard repertoire, notably songs from their first albums produced directly after the collapse of the Soviet Union. I suspect that these versions and arrangements of Tyvan folk songs will eventually be considered cannon and I was lucky enough to witness this happening in real time in the field.

Participant 12 gives insight into something special I witnessed in Tyva, that music is not owned; it is something to be shared. While the generosity with their music and traditions is a beautiful part of Tyvan culture, it is easy to see how other ethnicities and nations within the Altai-Sayan have taken advantage of this situation to minimize the contributions to khöömei by the Tyvans or even worse, altogether push the Tyvans out of Altai-Sayan throat singing culture. "The first place belongs to Tyvan music in Tyva. For example, not a single tourist, musician or anyone else who came to work from other countries leaves Tyva without a Tyvan folk song and without khөөmei." The belief that regardless of your position in life, you come to Tyva and leave with a song and some khöömei in your heart speaks volumes about the Tyvans. They freely share their music, the most important marker of what it means to be Tyvan in the 21st century, with anyone who makes the trip to the Center of Asia. The same in Tyva is said about the air and the water. You breathe the air, and you are drawn back to Tyva, you drink water from the rivers and

part of Tyva is with you forever. It is a beautiful concept that music is put into the same category as items we need for our basic survival.

I have painted a positive picture about the place and role of music in Tyva, however, Participants 4 and 11 beg to differ. Participant 4 informed me that, "Unfortunately, the average mull (sic) listener listens to Tyvan music. Pop culture has overwhelmed the culture." Participant 11 notes that, "Unfortunately, traditional music is not very popular in Tyva. If you ask any passer-by what Tyvan songs you know and what performers you know, he will begin to list Tyvan pop songs and pop singers." Here we see the idea that this globalization of culture is having a negative effect on Tyvan culture.

I am guilty of romanticizing Tyva and I will never forget the excitement I felt leaving the avalanche tunnel in Khakassia, going down the mountains and crossing into Tyva. My view of Tyva was shattered when the cab driver turned on local radio to hear a 1993 cut from Dr. Dre's seminal record "The Chronic" on Tyvan radio. I was crushed. Nineteen years of waiting to put my boots on the ground in Tyva, see the steppe, breathe the air and in my naïveté I was hoping to hear Kongar-ool Ondar or Genady Tumat's piercing sygyt come through the stereo, not the sounds of Death Row Records.

Question 13 "What is the role of music in contemporary Tyvan culture?"

Data from participants closely resembles that of Question 12 exploring the overall place/role of music in Tyvan culture. Participants believe that music has the "most important" role (*n = 15)* in contemporary Tyvan culture. The data further reflects that the role of music and Tyvan music itself is "evolving" (*n = 10)* within contemporary Tyvan culture. Participants also discussed a positive side of "globalization" (*n = 4)*, "pre-Soviet nomadic life" (*n = 2*), "nostalgia" (*n = 1)* and finally one participant informed me that they felt that music is "not

important" (*n = 1*) in contemporary Tyvan culture. In terms of descriptive markers of modern Tyvan identity the data can be categorized as "Tyvan music" (*n = 29*) and "Pre-Soviet nomadic life" (*n = 4)*.

In the minds of participants, Tyvan music serves several roles in contemporary Tyvan culture. Participant 9 speaks to a quasi-immigrant feeling stating that, "As I see my friends, relatives and me not living in Tyva, I can say that nowadays Tyvan music is like virtual bridge to home where you like positive memories, family, nature, own spirit." It is interesting that living "beyond the Sayan" within the territorial borders of the Russian Federation, Tyvans feel like foreigners in their own country. This response demonstrates the nostalgia not only for home, but pre-Soviet nomadic life and that Tyvan music is one of the key elements that leans into these feelings. Participant 43 also echoes these sentiments writing that, "Through our music we celebrate richness of our heritage." In my own informal conversations with Tyvans inside and outside of Tyva, there is a great pride in being Tyvan. I have been informed by Tyvans that the Tyvans are indigenous people that reside within the Russian Federation. This is of course the same mentality, as an example, of a Navajo person living inside the United States. They are Navajo first and foremost.

The majority of responses to Question 13 indicate that Tyvan music is the most important part of contemporary Tyvan identity. Participant 33 tells us, "Throat singing is a part of our culture, history and life." Participant 38 writes that, "In contemporary culture, Tyvan music and Xoomei, specifically, has become one of the essential symbols of Tyvan identity." Participant 26 takes a more globalized look at Tyvan music in the 21st century, "The Tyvan song is sung all over the world, everyone comes to learn the Tyvan language to sing in Tyvan." The Tyvan Cultural Center and International Khöömei Academy are seizing on this globalization and

connecting with students and enthusiasts of Tyvan khöömei to teach music and language courses. In the end, between field work, surveys and informal talks, khöömei plays an important role in contemporary Tyvan culture and cultural identity. The music is very much a living tradition and not a museum piece in the lives and minds of the Tyvans.

Question 14 "What is the role of music in Tyvan history?"

Data from participants on this question did not yield any surprises. Again, responses to this question show music in Tyvan history being "most important" (*n = 15)*. Participants also discussed music playing a role in "oral history" (*n = 5*), being essential to the "soul/spirit" (*n = 5*) of the Tyvan people, "pre-Soviet nomadic life" (*n = 5),* music serving a specific "function" (*n = 3*) in Tyvan history, "globalization" (*n = 1*), ancestors (*n = 1*) and a single outlier deemed music "unimportant" (*n = 1*) to Tyvan history. In terms of how these answers fit into the markers of modern Tyvan identity, coding was evenly split between "Tyvan Music" (*n = 19*) and "Pre-Soviet nomadic life" (*n = 19*).

Participant 4 encapsulates what I have come to understand about the role of music in Tyvan history. They answered, "Music is the spirit of the people, without it there would be no Tyvan people and their history too." This also speaks to the fact that oral tradition is extremely important to the Tyvan people. In terms of written language, at the turn of the 20th century, Mongolian script was being used to somewhat write Tyvan language, then the Latin alphabet was used prior to the Second World War before full Soviet Russification, formalization of the language and Cyrillic alphabet were instituted after the war. I hypothesize that when future linguistic studies will examine the 20th century history of Tyvan language, they will find significant damage was done to the language from the alphabet being changed three times in under fifty years.

Participant 12 provides a very clear picture of the music and function of music in Tyvan history. “Our ancestors did not sing as they do now, for example, on stage or especially for someone. They sang for themselves, for their sore soul, to reveal their experiences. Or they sang lullabies for their children, and this is also inside the yurt. And on special holidays, everyone sang in chorus. And the youth sang, Oytulaash, during the youth games. These are Tyvan ditties.” It is important that they chose to make a distinction between the function of historic and modern music in Tyva. Of course, in ancient times, the Tyvans were not concerned with making a product to be sold – what would Adorno think of the world music culture industry I wonder? It appears that in history, there was a more personal connection to music and song was used for both spiritual and secular functions. It is also important to point out here the idea of “everyone sang” together in a chorus as it leads into an important response from participant 24.

Tyvans, as I have learned, have a belief that people universally sing. Participant 24 tells us, “In history, Tyvan songs are not particularly illuminated, because Tyvans believed that all people in the world sing, just like everyone else talks. It turns out that not everyone is singing. For Tyvans, singing is a common thing.” What would American music education look like if we were to shift our own culture to the point of “singing is a common thing”?

In terms of historic and modern identity in Tyva, Participant 26 answered that, “I believe that it is Tyvan music that has made a huge contribution to the preservation of the national identity of Tyvans.” It is becoming blatantly clear that there is an inseparable bond between Tyvans and folk song. Further reinforcing this understanding, Participant 43 writes that music, “is one of the most powerful ethno-symbols for the Tyva people.” Music in Tyva is a symbol of the people, both past, present and as we will delve into Question 15, continue to function as a symbol and integral part of Tyvan identity in the future.

Question 15 "What will the role of Tyvan music be in 5, 10, and 20 years from now?"

Results of this question show the particpants' hope that Tyvan music will become "more familiar outside of Tyva" (*n = 12*). Data also reflects that beyond the music being more known, there is a hope Tyvan music "will evolve" (*n = 8*). Almost an equal number of participants hope that music "will remain unchanged" (*n = 6*). A smaller number answered equally that they were "unsure" (*n = 2*) of the fate of Tyvan music, but also the music "will always exist" *(n = 2*). Finally, participants believe that music would remain important to "modern Tyvan identity" (*n = 1)* and "important in Tyvan culture" (*n = 1*).

This question is the final question that explores the role of music in Tyva, and might be the most crucial given the ongoing colonial pressure to further Russify. How long in our globalized society, will this geographic isolation and barrier formula (Mongush, 2006) serve in the interest of Tyvan culture? I also wonder how much the first post-Soviet generation sees Tyva's place in the world and if they wish to maintain geographic isolation or if increased use of the internet, social media and the metaverse will serve as a virtual bridge to the world beyond the Sayan and Tannu-ool Mountains.

Participant 15 answered much of my personal wonderings with their belief that, "There will always be khoomei (sic) if Tuvinians live on the land." The answer did not necessarily specifically state Tyvan land, or the earth in general. Here in New York City, there are a few Tyvan families, and certainly we see music serving as that virtual bridge to Tyva, which has led me to hypothesize that the meaning of Participant 15's answer goes beyond the land in the Altai-Sayan, and instead as long as there are Tyvan people on earth, the music will survive.

Through the three years of field work, I have come to understand how proud Tyvans are of their khöömei and can understand the wish to see the music become more well known outside

of Tyva and the Altai-Sayan. Given the difficulty of travel, even pre-pandemic and special military operations aside, Tyva was not easy to reach. Cultural institutions in Tyva realize this and have developed a strong social media presence to reach a global audience. Participant 43 tells us, “With the Xöömei Academy established, I hope Tyvan music has a space to grow into a global musical phenomenon.” In conjunction with the Tyvan Cultural Center, the International Khöömei Academy (founded in 2021) is sponsoring the children’s Saradak khöömei festival and contest, the 2022 Khöömei in the Center of Asia Festival. Internet connectivity, at least in Kyzyl, is such that these festivals, academic seminars and singing contests are regularly broadcast live by the TCC and IKA.

Participants were nearly evenly split on the need for music to evolve versus remaining unchanged. Participant 26 gives a pragmatic summation acknowledging both points of view, “New directions in the use of Tyvan music will develop, and the spread of Tyvan music throughout the world will continue. However, efforts need to be made to keep it authentic, so that young people will love it in its purest form, and not in a mix with different directions.”

Tradition versus evolution is a constant debate in so many indigenous musics. In my bluegrass world there are people who refuse to see any value beyond, “the way Earl (Scruggs) did it.” In their minds Noam Pikelny and Bela Fleck do not belong in the bluegrass world. If this mentality becomes dominant in any indigenous or folk genre, the music risks becoming stagnant and worse eventually a museum piece. Despite increasing nationalism and Russification of Tyva, I believe the music is strong enough to resist these forces and continue to grow as a living tradition within Tyva. I also need to acknowledge it is easy from my etic position to make this conclusion from the comforts of my home in New York. At this point in time, I can only hope that the political situation will change and travel to Tyva will be more accessible in the years to

come so that fellow scholars and friends of Tyva can continue to visit and learn in the center of Asia.

Question 16 "Is the music a living tradition and being sustained for the future and supported?"

Questions 16 to 22 are the final section of questions in the survey. Specifically, they explore if and how Tyvan music is being kept a living tradition versus a museum piece by various governmental and non-governmental institutions inside Tyva. When asked in question 16 if the music is a living tradition and will be sustained for the future, not a single participant believed Tyvan music was not a living tradition. This includes Tyvans living inside and outside Tyva. I had hoped that question 16 was more open ended, however predominately participants responded with a single word or two. Answers were coded as "Yes" (*n = 14)*, "Hope" (*n = 5),* "Tyvan language" (*n = 3)*, "Ancestors" (*n = 2)*, "Music unifies" (*n = 1)* and "Affect on physiology" (*n = 1)*.

Participant 42 is probably the most qualified to answer this question due to a lifetime of recording seminal Tyvan albums, performing and advocating for Tyvan culture within the republic and abroad. Their answer, "Yes, it is. Hope it will be supported in the future too as in our days," reflects the pragmatism often found in people who came of age before the collapse of the Soviet Union. On one hand there is the acknowledgement that for the time being, the music is well supported in Tyva, but also shows the world view of growing up in successive dictatorships. In my field work, I came to understand the value of music in Tyva and see that the music is, in fact, being kept alive for the time being. Who can predict the future though? The reality is that of 85 states within the Russian Federation, Tyva ranks number 83 in economic development. With

the massive economic depression within Tyva and further economic sanctions, I wonder if it is a matter of time before money dries up.

As this project has progressed, I have begun to realize how music acts as a cognitive bridge to pre-Soviet nomadic life, ancestors and as a force that not only binds together the Tyvan people culturally, but also to their land. Participant nine reports, “Yes, I guess. Because Tyvan people will still need to express themselves and be unified with social glue.” Participant 2 also supports this cognitive bridge concept I have begun to understand answering, “yes, because together with the music of our ancestors we gain strength.” Participant 24 lives “beyond the Sayan” and reports, “I personally support, despite the fact that I do not live in Tyva, I communicate with children in Tyvan, I sing in Tyvan. In Tyva, my relatives taught me how to sing, and that's how I sing.” Again, through this answer we see how music and language continue to connect Participant 24 to their homeland.

Another common aspect of modern Tyvan Identity that has come of this study is the symbiotic relationship Tyvan music and Tyvan language hold. One cannot exist without the other, and field work has allowed me to witness the importance of both in modern Tyvan identity and life. Participant 26 answered this question by discussing the relationship between music and language, “As long as the language is alive, the music will live. As long as the music is alive, the language will live. If the language is alive, the people will not disappear.” So here, if I might postulate, the education system, both governmental and non-governmental can have a huge impact in maintaining and growing this relationship between music and language.

Presently, the Tyvan Cultural Center, under the direction of Igor Koshkendey as well as the International Khöömei Academy led by Bady Dorzhu Ondar, are both strong forces within the Republic of Tyva and working with schools in the promotion of Tyvan culture. Both

directors of these semi-autonomous NGOs have good working relationships with the Tyvan Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education and Tyvan Khural (parliament). I believe that under the leadership of the TCC and IKA, the future of Tyvan music and language is strong, supported and not destined to being relegated to museums and archives as a novelty of the past.

Question 17 "Is the music a living tradition and being sustained for the future and supported by the Government?"

Similar to the National Endowment for the Arts, the Ministry of Culture in Tyva administers governmental assistant to various arts organizations through direct funding. It goes without saying that in the United States we are fortunate to have an NEA and from its inception in 1966 has only seen one budget decrease in 1968 during the Johnson administration (NEA, 2022). While not a state secret in Russia, I was unable to locate budgetary data for the Tyvan Ministry of Culture.

Survey data shows that of the 44 responses to question 17, 45% (*n = 20)* answered "yes" that the Tyvan government is actively supporting Tyvan music. 6% (*n = 3*) answered "no", 15% (*n = 7)* were "unsure" and, to my surprise, 31% (*n = 14*) chose not to answer this question. Participant 4 was "unsure" about governmental support of music in Tyva and thus answered, "If they understand the value, then they will help." At the same time, Participant 11 qualified their "yes" with a similar answer, "Yes, but only if the government itself is interested in this." The two words that struck me in these answers were *value* and *interested*. Valuing music, I believe, has more to do with the economic realities in Tyva that have been previously discussed and witnessed in field work, as opposed to the government of Tyva not recognizing the aesthetical value of Tyvan music.

As to governmental *interest* in supporting music, there is frankly a history in Soviet Russia that dates to the early 1920s when the first folk orchestras were founded. These folk orchestras were used as a propaganda to promote not only ethnic and diverse cultures, but also the 100+ indigenous culture's in Lenin's new Soviet Union coming together as a new nation (Nercessian, 2000). The musical propaganda is in full force today with Putin's "Special Military Operation" with the Tyvan National Orchestra releasing a propaganda song in Tyvan language, complete with waving Russian flags at the Center of Asia obelisk and the singing being superimposed over footage of tanks firing machine guns and soldiers on horseback. Undoubtedly, the TNO had little choice in making this, and if we can be intellectually honest, they have families to feed and bills to pay – or even worse, facie jail for not supporting the invasion.

Looking at the 45% of participants that believe the Tyvan government is supporting Tyvan music, Participant 43 explains that, "The government tries to help" but does not elaborate further. Participant 26 gives some insight to this question writing, "The government of the republic has done a lot. The Tyvan National Orchestra, the State Theater of Song and Dance "Sayany", the Center of Tyvan Culture, opened the Academy "Khomei". I consider it an important step to support female throat singing in the form of conferring the title of "People's Khomeizhi" to women-khomeizhi - Tumat Choduraa and Oorzhak-Choodu Shonchalai. (sic)." In recent years female throat singers have become more prominent in Tyva, which has not always been the case. Traditionally, it was thought that female throat singers risked infertility or not having a beautiful face due to the muscles being used in singing khöömei (Levin & Süzükei, 2006).

Other examples gleaned from field work include government supported khöömei festivals and research symposiums that are free to attend and broadcast on local television as well as live streamed on the Internet. The Tyvan government has also funded the construction of the Center for Tyvan Culture, the khöömei ovaa at Aldyn Bulak, provides continued funding for the National Theatre, the Tyvan National Orchestra and Sayan Ensemble. The Tyvan Cultural Center began including online participation in their events, which started due to Covid19, for foreigners until such time that travel restrictions ease. It is my sincerest hope that in years to come, the government of Tyva will realize the value of their culture's music and continue to financially support important cultural institutions within the republic.

Question 18 "Is the music a living tradition and being sustained for the future and supported by performing arts organizations?"

Major performing arts organizations within the Republic of Tyva include the Tyvan Cultural Center, Sayan Theatre, Tyvan National Orchestra and the International Khöömei Academy. These NGOs are semi-autonomous, in that the Ministry of Culture is a major source of financial assistance. Ticket sales, monies received from music lessons, instrument sales, cultural souvenir sales (located on the main level of the Tyvan Cultural Center), food sales (also on the main level of the Tyvan Cultural Center) and finally private donations account for the balance of funding for performing arts organizations within the republic.

Prior to receiving answers from participants to this question, it was my assumption, based on field work, that internal performing arts organizations were and are doing the best they can, with limited resources, to keep Tyvan music a living tradition. 47.7% (*n = 21*) of survey participants answers were either "yes" or coded as "yes" that, in fact, performing arts organizations in Tyva are ensuring that Tyvan music continues to be a living tradition.

Participant 15 answered, “The Tyvan Culture Center assists in organizing international symposiums director Igor Koshkenday (sic)” and Participant 31 responded, “They do everything they can and sometimes even at their own expense.” 2% (*n = 1)* responded “no” to this question, and fortunately Participant 42 qualified their answer stating, “not so much. should be more.”

I was surprised at the number of participants who left the answer blank. A blank/no response accounted for 38.6% (*n = 17*) of the total responses to this answer. There may be few explanations for this. Questions that went into the final Qualtrics survey were interpreted and translated by a Tyvan colleague who is fluent in English, Tyvan and Russian. I do not believe there was an issue there. Next, I wonder if there is a messaging problem on the part of performing arts organizations within the republic. It could be that they simply are not getting out their message via various media. Finally, as all questions on the survey were optional, it very well might be that the participants simply chose not to answer.

11.3% (*n = 5*) of respondents were unsure if or how performing arts organizations were working to keep Tyvan music a living tradition and were coded as “unsure”. Participant 4 answered, “I think that rather an active private initiative will help.” Private funding, of course, requires disposable income from potential donors. Given the economic status of Tyva, and the amount of financial fraud that goes on within the republic, it is easy to understand why private donations are problematic for potential donors. In examining the data and contemplating observations from field work, I believe that performing arts organizations are doing the best they can with limited resources. Between the Tyvan Cultural Center being administered by Igor Koshkendey and the International Khöömei Academy being administered by Bady Dorzhu Ondar, both titans of Tyvan music and competent leaders, these organizations will ensure that Tyvan music remains and is sustained for the future a living tradition.

Here, I would suggest a model gleaned from field work in Mongolia. Ulaanbaatar aside, in the time I spent in the Mongolian countryside and driving across the country, every village, regardless of size, had some form of local cultural institution be it a small museum or larger cultural house. These venues attracted both local and foreign tourists. When Mongolia experienced significant economic downturn in the 2010s, the national and local government made the commitment to increase funding to local performing arts organizations to spur tourism and economic development (Ko, 2017). This model could be adapted in Tyva, but the major issue they would have to overcome in tourism is the complicated visa process that comes with visiting Tyva and the broader Russian Federation. In the future, I do believe that more investment in performing arts organizations, specifically khöömei would bring more tourists and economic investment into Tyva.

Question 19 "Is the music a living tradition and being sustained for the future and supported by Tyvan media or recording industry?"

Independent media in the Russian Federation is almost non-existent and field work via this survey confirmed the recording industry is still in its infancy within Tyva. That being said, it was still important to ask this question to see how participants viewed the state of media and recoding in Tyva.

Participants confirmed and gave new insight to my understanding of Tyvan media and developing recoding industry. 38% *(n = 17*) of participants answered directly "yes" or answers were coded as "yes" as compared to 2% (*n = 1)* with an answer of "no". Participants were "unsure" 9% (*n = 4)* and equally 9% believed the "industry too small" (*n = 4)* to effectively support Tyvan music. Further, 4% (*n = 2)* believed that support for sustaining music in the media and recoding industries is "improving". The answer I had not anticipated was the 2% (*n* =

1) acknowledging of both "internal and *external*" media and recording industries keeping the music a living tradition. Finally, a full 34% (*n = 15*) chose not to respond to the question, as all questions were optional in the survey.

Data from responses to this question show that most participants feel that media and the burgeoning Tyvan recording industry supports and sustains Tyvan music. Of these participants that answered "yes", only Participant 43 expanded on their answering stating, "There has been a (sic) support for Tyvan music from the media in post-Soviet Tyva." Prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union, Dr. Ted Levin was able to visit Tyva in 1987 to record *Tyva: Voices from the Center of Asia* (Alekseev, 1990). This was not an easy task, and Levin noted that the Soviet officials staged many cultural events (Levin & Süzükei, 2006). While not invalidating these seminal recordings, the circumstances under which they were made should be known.

In recent years Ovaa Media has made a name for itself producing high resolution 4K music videos and releasing them via their Youtube.com channel featuring prominent Tyvan khöömeizhi including Yer, Andrei Mongush and Oduchu Band. While this is not a direct international cooperation, Participant 22 replied that, "yes, but also from foreign records" could be a model of developing and sustaining Tyvan music as a living tradition. To the point of external recording companies both Huun-Huur Tu and Alash Ensemble have produced some of their most renowned albums outside of Tyva.

This is not to say that there is no internal recoding industry in Tyva. Participant 16 wrote that the recording industry, "Improves from year to year," and Participant 17 believes the recording industry, "will grow in the future." Located inside the Tyvan Cultural Center is a recording studio that has been utilized by Choduraa Tumat, Tyva Kyzy and of course the Tyva Ensemble. Independent of the Tyvan Cultural Center, Hogzhumchu Records – hogzhum

(хөгжүм) is the Tyvan word for music – has produced fine records and video content for Aleksey Khovalyg, the Tyvan National Orchestra and Aylangmaa Damyrang.

Participants 19, 20 and 21 responses fell under the "industry too small" code. Participant 19 asserts that the government might be helpful in supporting the recording industry in Tyva, "The recording industry in Tyva is very difficult to implement without the help of the government or ministry. With their help, 2 (sic) good studios have been implemented in Kyzyl." I believe here the difficulties Participant 19 is referring to is not only the cost of building and maintaining a modern recording studio, but also the teaching and training of first-rate recording engineers and producers According to Participant 20, "Center of Tyvan Culture Koshkendey Igor helps Khoomeizhi (sic)," and Participant 21 believes that, "It would be good to have some support from a new media."

So here again we see the TCC mentioned as well as Director Igor Koshkendey. As discussed earlier in this and previous chapters, the TCC continues to blossom under Igor Koshkendey. It is a difficult job, but I do not believe there is anyone currently better suited to the position than Igor as he is a well-respected People's Khöömeizhi, recording artist, touring musician and frankly effective in navigating governmental bureaucracies within Tyva. Koshkendey is tasked with maintaining his culture's musical traditions and has an unimaginable responsibility and weight to carry.

Recording technology has also become radically democratized in recent years as the cost of personal computers continue to drop. DAW software needed for recording and production has options including open source and free software such as Audacity and Reaper, or bundled software including Ableton Live Lite and Garageband to industry standard Pro-Tools and Logic,

both of which price under $1000. Currently, due to geopolitical issues, it is difficult for the average Tyvan or Russian to obtain the necessary technology for recording, but not impossible.

Question 20 "Is the music a living tradition and being sustained for the future and supported by tourism in Tyva?"

Data collected in the survey for Question 20 revealed that only 31.8% (*n = 14)* of participants responded "yes" that the tourism industry in Tyva is helping maintain and sustain music as a living tradition. Conversely, only 6.8% (*n = 3)* responded with a definitive "no" to the same question. 13.6% (*n = 6)* were "unsure", while 2.2% (*n =1)* "not yet", 2.2% (*n =1)* answered that tourism is "not focused on music," 2.2% (*n =1),* "covid has effected tourism", and an optimistic 2.2% (*n =1)* "not yet". Something that I suspected prior to and after field work and was confirmed by 9% (*n = 4*) of participants was that the relationship between tourism and music was opposite and in fact "music supports tourism" in Tyva. Finally, 31.8% of the participants (*n = 14*) chose not to answer the question.

Visiting Russia is a difficult process for those who need a visa to enter the country, which is the majority of people on earth. I speak from personal experience as I have been traveling to Russia for nearly 30 years as a tourist and researcher. In the case of my field work in Tyva, it took nineteen years from first hearing the music to being able to meet the requirements to get a visa to go to Tyva. The Russian government requires a lengthy application, a letter of invitation from the person or organization sponsoring your visit and finally, a very costly fee based on the type of visa required to enter the country. If the embassy is not satisfied, technically they can demand financial records and an in person interview. Even in the case of the World Cup in 2018, tourists still needed to go through this process, though going through customs was much easier in Moscow's Sheremetyevo International Airport than normal.

Due to ongoing travel restrictions, I cannot help but wonder if it is even worth asking if and how tourism can help support music in Tyva. Travel restrictions will not last forever and tourism will necessarily play a role in Tyva and Tyvan music in the future. Participants that discussed music supporting tourism provided the most complete answers to the question versus a simple "yes" or "no".

Keeping an eye towards the future, I believe, along with several participants in this survey that music will support tourism, which in turn will aid in the economic development of the Tyvan Republic. Participant 19 responded, "Tyvan music attracts the international music interested audience and music event tourism must be developed (sic)." In recent years the Tyvan Cultural Center has hosted international khöömei festivals and academic symposiums that have attracted visitors from outside of the Russian Federation, myself included. In addition to local hotels and cafes benefitting from tourist dollars, cultural workers including musicians and instrument makers benefitted financially from these events. Participant 17 noted that music is, "a visiting card of Tyva." Of further interest, Participant 18 believes that, "Tyvan traditional music is a part of tourism and it should support it more." Here Participant 18 feels that music and cultural institutions should be doing more to bring in tourists to Tyva.

Based on observations in the field, the Tyvan Cultural Center has done a fine job with limited resources navigating the visa process and hosting foreigners within the republic. Not being an expert on tourism or economic development via tourism, I can only request that the TCC also consider aiding tourists with the additional "border zone" visa required to visit areas of the republic along the Mongolian border known for dramatic scenery and areas including Möngün Taiga where pastoralists have their own unique khöömei. At this point, I cannot predict the future or whether I will ever have the opportunity to return to Tyva. Tourism and music have

a symbiotic relationship in Tyva. Music serves as the entrance point for the majority of tourists in Tyva and from there, eyes and hearts are opened to this amazing culture and people.

Question 21 "Is the music a living tradition and being sustained for the future and supported by universities and public schools in Tyva?"

Data and analysis for this question will be broken into three groups: those who self-identify as teachers of Tyvan music, those who self-identify as non-teachers of Tyvan music and those who chose not to report teacher status. 34% (*n =15*) of participants self-identified as teachers of Tyvan music against 52% (*n = 23*) who do not self-identify as teachers of Tyvan music. A final 13% (*n = 6*) that chose not to respond to the question of whether they teach Tyvan music. Overall results show that 34% (*n = 15*) of participants responded "yes" that universities and public schools support and sustain Tyvan music as a living tradition versus 13% (*n = 6*) that answered "no". 11% (*n = 5*) were "unsure", 4% believed there is "minimal" support and 2% (*n = 1)* believe that it is "unlikely" that universities and public schools support Tyvan music. Finally, 34% (*n = 15)* chose not to answer the question.

Of the 15 teachers that self-identify as teachers of Tyvan music 40% (*n = 6)* answered "yes" that universities and public schools support and sustain Tyvan music versus 6% (*n = 1)* that answered "no". An additional 13% (*n = 2*) were "unsure", 6% (*n = 1*) answered "unlikely" and finally 33% (*n = 5)* chose not to answer the question. Note that several more prominent Tyvan musicians participated, however they did not self-identify as teachers of Tyvan music as they are not certified by the Russian government to be educators. This is a different model of thinking than in the United States where a competent musician can offer private instruction at a local music store or teaching studio, but not have a state issued teaching license.

Participants who self-identity as non-teachers of Tyvan music (*n = 23*) shared similar views with those participants who self-identify as teachers of Tyvan music. 39% (*n = 9)* answered "yes" that universities and public schools support and sustain Tyvan music versus 21% (*n = 5*) that answered "no". 13% answered "unsure" while 8% (*n = 2*) answered that there is "minimal" support in universities and public schools for Tyvan music. 17% (*n = 4*) chose not to answer the question. Further, participants who chose not to identify "yes" or "no" to their status as a teacher of Tyvan music (*n = 6*). Finally, these participants who did not reveal their status as teachers also left the answer "blank" as to whether or not Tyvan music is being supported and sustained by universities and public schools.

Unfortunately, teachers of Tyvan music that answered "yes" to this question did not elaborate on how music is being sustained and supported by universities and public schools in Tyva. Participant 21 replied that universities and public schools, "help by bringing students and fresh blood," to Tyvan music. Participant 12 gave a clearer picture of music education in Tyva writing, "This is a very good support for the development of Tyvan music. A lot of children study in schools, in additional education. And this is the merit of their teachers."

For those participants who do not teach Tyvan music but answered "yes", much like their teacher counterparts, answers were predominately a single word. Participant 32 made a point of mentioning the Kyzyl Arts College where students can earn a degree in traditional Tyvan music. Participant 43 answered, "There is extra curriculum courses in Tyvan music and xöömey (sic) in the schools in addition to the courses in the specialized art schools in Kyzyl and kozhuuns."

The single music teacher, Participant 4, that replied "no" to this question did not elaborate on why they believe universities and public schools are not sustaining and supporting music beyond writing, "not at all." Participant 11 was more ambivalent answering, "possible, but

unlikely" to the question. Of the non-teachers of Tyvan music responses contained slightly more content. Participant 16 answered, "I did not see that at school there was something about Tyvan music, also at the university." Participant 20 notes, "I wish although it is not so much today. Keep traditions but at the same time (sic)."

In my own field work, I did not have the correct visa to visit schools in Tyva and was unable to corroborate these answers. While I may have been able to visit Tyvan schools and observe without immigration authorities knowing, I did not want to risk being permanently banned from entering Tyva and the Russian Federation in future years, which is a very real consequence of violating the terms of your travel visa. It goes without saying that in future studies, should field work even be possible, I plan to delve deeper into how music is being supported and sustained by the local education system. The good news from these responses is that, for the time being, it appears that Tyvan music is not at risk of not being a living tradition and is in fact being supported by universities and public schools.

Question 22 "How do you envision the best way of creating a sustainable future for your music?"

What is the way forward for Tyvan music? Participants responded with a myriad of ideas, that for the most part were practical and could be implemented now and in the years to come. 36% (*n = 16*) responses were coded as dealing with education. The largest of these education related codes is "education and promoting Tyvan musicians" (*n = 5*) followed by the need to "educate children in Tyvan language and Tyvan music" (*n = 4)*. Participants also want to see the development of "educational sound archives" (*n = 2*), "university degrees" (*n = 2)*, "educational concerts" (*n = 2)*, "building more cultural centers" (*n* = 1), and "specialized training programs"

(*n = 1)* outside of the universities and public schools such as the International Khöömei Academy.

Looking past education-based recommendations, participants suggested putting more Tyvan music on "streaming music platforms" (*n = 3*), building and supporting the Tyvan "recording industry" (*n = 1*) as well as more "international tours for musicians" (*n = 1*) that would allow musicians to "promote Tyvan culture" (*n = 1*). Domestically, there is a desire to "incorporate Tyvan music into pop music" (*n = 2)*, "keep oral tradition" (*n = 1),* and fears "globalization" (*n = 1*) will have a negative impact on Tyvan music. Finally, a single participant was "unsure" (*n = 1*) of how to create a sustainable future and 16 participants chose not to answer this question.

Based on data collected and analyzed, it appears, according to the Tyvans who participated in the study, that education is the most certain way to create a sustainable future for Tyvan music. The first step then is to reevaluate curriculum in Tyvan schools. Participant 8 writes, "I think Tyvan music history and classes should be taught in schools at least for 1-2 years. But I also think that Tyvan history and geography classes and (sic) outdated, so they first need to be modernized." Participant 9 addressed the need to have, "special cultural lessons in schools for children," of which might include, "Tyvan language and khöömei" as suggested by Participant 15.

It could very well also be that part of updating curriculum might include the educational sound archives discussed by Participants 21 and 12. According to Participant 21 the sound archives are important for, "preserving the old time music" "Tyvan songs in the ancient style (sic). So that generations do not forget the timbre and style of Tyvan music." According to Participant 21, the traditional "ancient" style is important for future generations. Given that

Tyvan music is certainly a living oral tradition, the use of modern sound archives can be used in the framework of sound before sight music learning. As it were, the International Khöömei Academy, a quasi-NGO is currently developing a sound archive that includes the earliest field recording of Tyvan khöömei, specifically a kargyraa solo, recorded in 1909 in the Khemchik region of Tyva.

In addition to teaching and learning in the primary grades, participants also hope to see advanced training in higher education and specialized training programs for teachers. Participant 26 hopes to see, “Training of certified specialists with higher professional education,” as does Participant 10 who hopes to see, “higher education institutions with this direction.” As it were, there is a small traditional music degree program at Tyvan State University in Kyzyl, but clearly there is room for it to grow. In the future, this might mean admitting foreign students as well as Tyvans. In addition to the degree program at Tyvan State University, Participant 27 answered that, “This year, that is 2021, the International Academy "Khoomei" was opened and I think this is the future of our Khoomei”. This specialized training program, directed by Bady Dorzhu Ondar offers in person and online instruction in Tyvan, Russian and English. Due to current economic issues, getting payment from outside Russia to the Academy for lessons is difficult and is certainly hurting the mission of the International Khöömei Academy.

Live performances for students were also addressed by participants, specifically the need for educational concerts. Participant 2 wishes to see musicians and educators, “combine and arrange concerts more often so that people understand that music is an art.” In addition to these education concerts, several participants want to see more support and promotion for Tyvan musicians at home and abroad to teach and share their music. Participant 31 wishes to, “Keep the original shape (of Tyvan khöömei) and financial support for the musicians. This sentiment is

partially echoed by Participant 42 who writes, “Keep traditions but at the same time evolve and create own International stars and spread an influence.” Like any form of traditional music, there is certainly debate in Tyva as to what the evolution of their khöömei means and will it look like. Some do not want the music to be brought into more popular music styles while others find it acceptable for khöömei to be aesthetically correct but adopted for use in popular music styles.

The internet and technology will also be essential for the future of Tyvan music. To this end, Participant 7 emphasizes that, “Professional recording studios producing and interacting more” in the realm of Tyvan music is essential. In addition to more work in the recording industry, at least for the foreseeable future, internet streaming of music is here to stay. Participant 38 believes having Tyvan music available to stream will result in “worldwide recognition.” The same sentiment is shared by Participant 24 who believes that streaming services will allow for “Tyvan singers, khöömeizhi (sic). So they do everything, they are known all over the world. If they find out in other planets, it would be great!” Interplanetary reach aside, Participant 5 just wants to see a larger “Presence on online music platforms.” While a larger presence online can be beneficial Participant 4 does worry that “Globalization will destroy us.”

It seems that education and technology are the primary means that participants in this study believe to be the way to create a sustainable future for Tyvan music. A major step forward in this direction came on April 23, 2021 when the International Khöömei Academy received their official teaching license No. 17014 from the Russian government. This license allowed for the IKA to legally teach and issue diplomas and certificates for professional development courses, private instruction and continuing education courses to students of all ages. It is very possible that the real way forward to creating a sustainable future for Tyvan music will be through the IKA which is largely independent from governmental regulation and interference.

Early Musical Memories

The first five questions in the twenty-two-question survey explored early musical memories and how the participants learned Tyvan khöömei. Participants recalled early memories of khöömei being performed by a relative, often in a rural setting. This relative was always male, lending support to Levin and Süzükei (2006) (Levin & Süzükei, 2006) who discussed cultural understanding in Tyva that traditionally women did not sing khöömei. In recent years several female khöömeizhi have been recognized with national awards for their work. I hypothesize that in a generation from now, the old ideas relating to female khöömeizhi may not be as prevalent.

Outside of currently published literature, a new contribution to the literature will be the idea that khöömei is the genetic code of the Tyvan people. To this end, respondents who could not recall the first time hearing khöömei found that it did not matter due to khöömei being in their DNA. Participants also shared folkloric stories including that before people were on the Altai Sayan, the bird songs came to the steppe, and those spirits are now embodied in both the land and people of Tyva.

These early survey questions also explored other music learning outside of Tyvan music participants received as well as how and where they learned khöömei. Of the total participants in this survey ($N = 44$) only nine ($n = 9$) reported learning exclusively Tyvan music, while thirty reported receiving "foreign" training in western music. Given the long history of Tyva being colonized by foreign powers (Forsyth, 1992) and current studies on Tyvan-Russian relations (Poppe, 2008), seeing Tyvan music classified as indigenous while western music is considered foreign/Russian music, shows that Tyvan music is in fact very important to modern Tyvan identity.

Questions four and five looked at the spaces where and how participants learned their khöömei. Results showed that khöömei remains an oral/aural tradition in at least the post-Soviet era, despite Tyva still being a colonized space. Participants also defined spaces in which music learning occurs, predominately away from the classroom and cities. Rather, data reflects learning in the natural environment working with animals or other daily tasks of pastoral and nomadic life. Further, khöömei is not just for the stage, but for all Tyvans regardless of training. Again, this concept comes from folkloric stories and the new concept emerging that khöömei is part of the genetic code of the Tyvan people.

Finally, Tyvan people learn their khöömei predominately as an aural/oral tradition. Only five responses discussed learning by notation, and even in those cases rote learning by ear was part of the process. These results confirm Süzükei (2017) who asserts that the western style of music learning is incompatible with Tyvan khöömei and Tyvan instruments (igil, doshpuluur etc.). Since 2021, the International Khöömei Academy, based at the TCC in Kyzyl, has offered online lessons, creating a new virtual space for khöömei teaching and learning. While the learning space is virtual, methodology for learning still is exclusively in the oral/aural tradition. Going forward, further study of khöömei teaching and learning in virtual spaces would be a worthwhile contribution to the literature.

Teaching Khöömei, How and Why

Question six through eight explored the how and why people choose to teach khöömei in Tyva. Question 6, specifically, was a trigger question programmed into the Qualtrics software that asked the participants to identify whether or not they teach Tyvan music. If the participants answered yes, they were asked questions 6 through 8, while if the answer was no, the survey skipped ahead to question nine. The answers provided by participants who self-reported as

teachers of Tyvan music cannot be supported or disproven in the existing published literature due to this being the first study and contribution to the literature that explored teaching and transmission of folksong in Tyva including individual teacher specific methodologies.

The first question in the teacher specific section of the survey, specifically Question 28 (numbered this way to a problem with the Qualtrics software) inquired methodology, specifically the use of notation and further why the teacher chose to teach Tyvan music. Of the nine teachers that answered this question, only one replied that they in fact use notation while the balance indicated they taught by rote. This supports Süzükei (2017) who asserts Tyvan music is not suited for western notation and teaching methodologies. Tyvan music continues to be an aural/oral tradition. Responses to why these participants choose to teach Tyvan music ($n = 9$) all speak to a sense of responsibility they feel to the future and continuity of their khöömei. As no published works exploring individual teacher's feelings on why they teach Tyvan music, this is a new contribution to the literature.

It should then not be a surprise that when question seven asked about the importance of teaching Tyvan music, all participants ($n = 9$) again chose to discuss their feelings of responsibility for the continuity of Tyvan khöömei. Khöömei, according to the responses in this question, is considered a unique gift from the ancestors of the Tyvan people. Thus, when the teacher passes on khöömei, it is with the voice of their ancestors and also serves as a way to help distinguish Tyvan khöömei from the other variants found throughout the Altai-Sayan.

Question eight was the final teacher specific question and inquired about how these teachers felt and continue to feel about teaching Tyvan khöömei. Again, teachers discussed the responsibility they have for the continuity of Tyvan khöömei. In addition to the responsibility they feel, participants also explained that teaching Tyvan khöömei reinforced their sense of

modern Tyvan identity. Both Mongush (2006) and Beahrs (2014) discuss khöömei being an important contributing factor to modern Tyvan identity in the post-Soviet era, as such these results further confirm their findings.

Authenticity, Status and Individual Feelings about Khöömei

Questions nine through eleven explored participant's individual feelings about Tyvan khöömei, status of the music and finally issues of authenticity. Knowing that Tyvan khöömei is an essential part of post-Soviet Tyvan identity, it was not a surprise that zero negative feelings were reported in regard to individual feelings about Tyvan music. Many responses dealt with the function of the music in individual lives. Some of these functions discussed in existing literature include the connection to pre-Soviet nomadic life (Beahrs, 2014) to helping people with financial and emotional issues. While existing literature discusses the use of shamans to aid people with a wide variety issues (Kenin-Lopsan et al., 1997; Levin & Süzükei, 2006), the use of khöömei to aid in economic and emotional distress is new.

What is the status of Tyvan khöömei? Is it a living tradition or stagnant and a museum piece? Participants in the study report the music to be the former not the latter. There were zero responses indicating Tyvan khöömei as stagnant. Much credit is given to the TCC and IKA for their efforts to ensure Tyvan music does not stagnate. Others replied again that of course the music would evolve due to it being in the DNA of the Tyvan people. Music is clearly an important marker of modern Tyvan identity and I speculate, at least in my lifetime, the music is secure, evolving and will not be relegated to something in a museum. Participants feel that as long as Tyvan people exist, so will there khöömei.

Authenticity of music is subjective. Going into this study, I had my own ideas about what might qualify as authentic Tyvan music. Prior to this study, definitions of "authentic" Tyvan

music have not been published. According to published literature, Tyvan music and Tyvan language are important markers of modern Tyvan identity (Mongush, 2006). The use of Tyvan language as a marker of authentic Tyvan music also supports the findings of Chevalier (2010) who reported official Russian statistics that 99.6% of Tyvan people speak Tyvan language as their primary language. While I received twenty-five opinions on what "authentic" Tyvan music is, there were several commonalities. According to the responses gathered, authentic Tyvan music should include some khöömei styles (sygyt, kargyraa, khöömei etc) (*n = 17)*, be a recognized Tyvan folk song (*n = 13*), played exclusively on Tyvan instruments (*n = 5)* and sung in the Tyvan language (*n = 3*). Deviation from this formula was not discussed by participants but for a single response noting the use of any western instruments would be a deviation from tradition and not Tyvan music.

Where then would this position Alash, Huun Huur Tu, the late Kongar-ool Ondar, Yat-Kha and Hartyga in Tyvan music? All of these ensembles and musicians have used western instruments including drumset and guitar in recordings. Further, Oidupaa made a career of singing his style of kargyraa accompanied by the bayan, a western instrument brought to Tyva by colonizing Russians. Authenticity in music is difficult to approach, and I have tried to not inject my opinions on this subject. Grounded techniques has allowed for participants' opinions to be shared and contribute to new literature in Tyvan music.

Past, Present and Future of Khöömei in Tyvan Culture

Questions twelve through fifteen in the survey inquired about the past, present and future role of music in Tyvan culture. Participants affirmed my belief that music is one of the most essential aspects of Tyvan culture and modern Tyvan identity. This also confirms the work of Mongush (2006) who found that music is one of the main ways the Tyvan people have created a

modern identity in the post-Soviet era. From my own time in the field, I witnessed the essentialness of music in daily life. Every formal and informal event I attended from music festivals to lake side picnics always included a song. Survey participant 43 wrote in response to the role of music in Tyvan culture, “Tyvan music supports resilience of the Tyva (sic) people against colonial cultural and educational policies.” Some of these education policies include severe limits to indigenous language learning as well as a forced bilingualism that results in loss of indigenous language in favor of the colonial power’s language (Chevalier, 2010; Hauer, 2018).

The role of music in Tyvan history, according to contemporary responses, was equally important. Much of the ancient history of Tyva is found in oral history and folkloric sources, according to participants in this study. In discussing a disadvantage to oral history, participants described the history of Tyvan music not being well documented, while others described music of the ancestors being a powerful symbol of the history of the Tyvan people and culture. Beahrs (2014) discusses Tyvan’s use of khöömei to connect with and revitalize pre-Soviet nomadic life. The findings in this dissertation, in regard to the role of music in Tyvan history, are supported by current literature.

What is the direction Tyvan music is headed in the next five, ten and twenty years? Participants believe that khöömei will play a central role in Tyvan culture. There is a belief the music will continue to evolve, but hope that it will not be fully absorbed by western pop styles. Continued Russification, I believe, is a major threat to Tyvan music.

If traditional attitudes assert khöömei is the exclusive domain of men, though this dissertation has noted a shift in these attitudes, , untold numbers of military age men have fled Russia, including Tyvans, it could be that as Participant 15 answered, “There will always be

khöömei if Tuvinians (sic) live on the land." It might mean that the "land" referred to might include Mongolia, Kazakhstan and other sympathetic Inner and Central Asian countries who are actively encouraging Asian minorities in Russia to immigrate to their countries. Now also might be the time for cultural organizations worldwide to find a way for Tyvans and other indigenous peoples in the Russian Federation to be granted temporary travel visas.

Is Tyvan Khöömei a Living Tradition and Protected for Future Generations

The final set of questions in the survey asked participants their opinion on the state of Tyvan music, whether it is a living tradition or not, and how various entities within Tyva are working to sustain and support Tyvan khöömei. Current published literature does not explore contemporary efforts to sustain music in Tyva as a living tradition, and as such, this section of the survey provides new contributions to existing literature. Question 16 asks participants about the state of Tyvan music before delving into entities within Tyva. Participants universally believe that khöömei and Tyvan music are living traditions. Supporting current literature exploring music and language as key markers of modern Tyvan identity (Mongush, 2006), Participant 26 discussed a symbiotic relationship between Tyvan language and Tyvan music, noting that music will survive if Tyvan language survives, and Tyvan language will survive if Tyvan music survives.

Looking at governmental support of Tyvan music, participants share a pragmatism that the government, in the past, has done what they can to support Tyvan music. Participant 11 indicated the Tyvan government only supports music when it fits the interests of the government. This was made apparent to when the TCC released a patriotic music video on March 6, 2022. Prominent Tyvan musicians sang at the Center of Asia monument while superimposed videos of military machines rolled in the background (Tuvancenter, 2022). In this instance, government

financial support was tied to state propaganda and I hypothesize that had the cultural workers not participated, there would have be serious consequences under new laws passed in Moscow.

Performing arts organizations, media and recording industry also play a role in sustaining Tyvan music as a living tradition. Here again, participants believe that these entities are doing the best they can, and field work can confirm that there is a contingent of Tyvans in performing arts organizations including the Sayan Theatre, TCC, National Theatre working diligently to sustain and promote Tyvan music. While these organizations are technically non-governmental entities, major funding is provided by the Tyvan government via the Ministry of Culture.

In the calendar year 2022, independent media has been quashed in Russia. Ovaa Media in the past has released well produced khöömei related content, but also seem to have been silenced. Tyvans also have to open high quality music production studios. With now decades of democratized access to recording technology and initial financial investment into production studios dropping, Tyva has been on trajectory to have a new and bourgeoning recording industry. While two quality studios exist in Kyzyl, sanctions have made access to essential recording software and hardware more complicated to obtain. There is no current research exploring the Tyvan recording industry, so responses documented in this dissertation are a first.

Tourism also had and yet may have a role in sustaining Tyvan music. The predominate view in the pre-covid era was that yes (*n = 13*) tourism was playing an active role in supporting music. When travel restrictions ease, certainly tourism will support music. Given that a key aspect of modern Tyvan identity is music (Mongush, 2006), several participants (*n = 4*) believed that the relationship was opposite and that Tyvan music could necessarily support the tourism industry in the Republic. I believe with both cultural and ecological tourism on the rise, Tyva

might use a tourist model similar to that of the Kingdom of Bhutan that balances both the tourist economy and sustainability of indigenous culture and ecosystems (Dasgupta & Vogelaar, 2022).

Most important, are future generations learning their musical culture? What role does primary, secondary and collegiate education play in sustaining and supporting Tyvan music. Responses were evenly split between those who did not answer (*n = 15*) and those who answered a definitive "yes" (*n = 15*). Only six participants decidedly answered "no" (*n =6*) with the balance answering in variations of "unsure" and "minimal" support in Tyvan education. Tyvan music is part of the school curriculum in schools, but participants did not answer to what degree. Further, it is possible to obtain the equivalent of a bachelor's degree in Tyvan music from Tyvan State University in Kyzyl. Outside of the Tyvan capital, Participant 43 noted that there are specialized art schools in the kozhuuns where students can study Tyvan music.

In 2021 the International Khöömei Academy opened in Kyzyl with the goal of teaching Tyvan music, language and folklore both locally and globally. When Russia was cut off from most international banking systems, it has been impossible to teach international students, not for lack of internet connectivity, but rather inability to be paid. The current literature exploring teaching and learning of khöömei in Tyva is limited to Süzükei (2017) who suggests teaching pedagogy for Tyvan music should remain an aural/oral model as western methodologies are not compatible Tyvan music. Responses neither confirmed or contradicted Süzükei (2017) due to participants not discussing specific methodologies. As soon as travel is possible, I intend to return to the Center of Asia to further explore traditional Tyvan teaching methodologies.

Finally, current literature does not explore what the people of Tyva believe to be the best way to sustain and support Tyvan music as a living tradition, which was why question 22 was asked in this survey. Participants believe a combination of education and technology to be the

way forward. There is hope for more integration of khöömei and Tyvan music into education curriculum in primary, secondary and universities, while maintaining the aural/oral tradition as advocated for by Süzükei (2017). Participant 26 wishes to see trained khöömei educators coming out of Tyvan colleges and universities. In terms of technology, participants wish to see an educational sound archive so that, "generations do not forget the timbre and style of Tuvan (sic) music," as answered by Participant 12. Participants also hoped that more Tyvan khöömei will make its way onto streaming platforms in the years to come.

From my own time in the field, results from chapter five and six of this dissertation, it is apparently clear that Tyva and the Tyvan people are an extremely musical culture. Existing literature (Beahrs, 2014; Mongush, 2006) discuss the importance of music in modern Tyvan identity, and I have come to believe, based on field work and survey data, that music is, in fact, the primary means in which the Tyvan people manifest their identity to the world beyond the Sayan. Survey data and field work confirm existing literature and contribute new findings to the many roles music plays in not only modern Tyvan identity, but modern Tyvan culture at large.

Chapter 7

Conclusions and New Theory

By June 23, 2022, the Special Military Operation was four months old. I have been fairly tuned into media in Tyva, both traditional and underground independent media and get daily updates on the effort to "de-Nazify" Ukraine. Most of the updates from "official" media is cheerleading, while underground media is a daily stream of dead Tyvan soldiers. Recently, Vladimir Shabalin, father of four, died and upon hearing the news, his mother died from a massive coronary. To date, officially, the Tyvans have lost 80 men in combat, or .00027% of their total population. This would be the equivalent of 88,000 dead Americans in four months of combat. The losses are unimaginable.

When I first entered the field in 2017, never could I have imagined a global pandemic or geopolitical tensions preventing travel to Tyva. Selfishly, I wonder if I will drink from the Yenisei or sit on top of Dögee again in my lifetime. To date, to effectively perform field work and understand the data collected, I have spent 37,000 miles in the air or enough milage to circle the earth one and a half times at the equator. This also does not count the 12,700 miles round trip to Kazakhstan, where the Kazakh folk music curriculum inspired this dissertation or the 14,400 miles round trip to Eldoret, Kenya where I was fortunate enough to spend time teaching thanks to the invitation of Dr. Skip Taylor.

Beyond the air travel of just getting to the field, becoming proficient in rudimentary Tyvan and Russian was crucial as there is certainly a large language barrier. To be accepted in Tyva as a musician and be called "khöömeizhi", is a great honor that I carry. I also needed to

learn several Tyvan instruments including demir khomus, doshpuluur, igil and chanzy. In addition to the instruments, being able to sing, proficiently, sygyt, khöömei and kargyraa was crucial to being accepted as someone who was not in Tyva to exploit their khöömei.

After two summers in Tyva and a third in Mongolia, plans were set to return again to Kyzyl in the summer of 2020 to conduct interviews and collect data for the dissertation. The natural world, had other plans, and the world suffered two long years of the Covid19 pandemic. Travel and field work became impossible, and the data collection was shifted to two surveys online via Qualtrics, one being a Likert-Scale for rating important markers of modern Tyvan identity. The second survey being more qualitative in nature meant to understand the teaching, learning and the role of music in modern Tyvan culture. Without spending the time in the field to meet the people, learn the language, music and culture, results would have been impossible to understand and interpret.

In the end, most of my assumptions on how the study would progress and what would be revealed in the data could not have been more wrong. This is not a bad thing as I was forced to throw my preconceived ideas away and approach the data with a clean slate. The result is a first of its kind mixed methods music education and ethnomusicological dissertation exploring the teaching and learning of music in the Republic of Tyva and the space music occupies in modern Tyvan culture and identity. Should field work in the future be impossible for music educators and ethnomusicologists, this dissertation will serve as a contemporary entry point for those interested in Tyva, Tyvan khöömei and Tyvan culture.

Summary of Findings and Related Literature

At the outset of this project there were two main goals. The first to better understand the role of music in modern Tyvan cultural identity and second the transmission of Tyvan music.

From the first time I listened to Tyvan music, largely by chance, until I entered the field, 19 years passed. It was my assumption that music is important to Tyva and that was in fact confirmed. Tyva is the most musical culture I have experienced to date, having had the great fortune to visit 55 countries on five continents. While there might be a more musical culture, I have yet to come across it.

Current published literature is limited in exploration of modern Tyvan identity and teaching methodologies (Beahrs, 2014; Mongush, 2006; Süzükei, 2017). Descriptive data from this dissertation shows the primary importance of music in Tyvan identity and culture above other published markers including religion, language, geography, non-musical art and pre-Soviet nomadic life. Descriptive survey data support earlier publications (Beahrs, 2014; Mongush, 2006; Mongush, 2019) that established art, religion, geography, and pre-Soviet nomadic culture as important markers of modern Tyvan cultural identity in the 21st Century. Tyvan music and Tyvan language, both driving forces in modern Tyvan cultural identity, are in a good state, a living tradition and not facing extinction in spite of internal pressures to further Russify (Chevalier, 2010; Forsyth, 1992; Hagendoorn et al., 2008; Hauer, 2018; Poppe, 2008).

The final question on the initial survey was requesting further participation in the larger twenty-two questions survey meant to be a means of qualitative inquiry in lieu of field work that could not be performed due to Covid19 travel restrictions. The major goal, for me, in this second survey, was to better understand teaching and transmission of Tyvan khöömei. To accomplish this, questions were all focused towards music, but specific questions dealing with music learning were spread throughout the survey. This was done to avoid the participants guessing the nature of the dissertation project and potentially run into the issue of being told what I wanted to hear.

The second survey was developed based on sample questions discussed by Schippers (2010) that were suitable for music educators new to field work and the interview process. Questions one through five explored early musical memories and how the participants learned Tyvan khöömei. Questions six through eight were sent to participants who replied "yes" to whether or not they taught Tyvan music. These questions dealt specifically with how they teach the music. Questions nine through eleven explored all participants general feelings towards Tyvan music and issues surrounding authenticity. Questions twelve to fifteen asked the participants to discuss the role music plays in Tyvan culture and where the music will be decades from now. Questions sixteen through twenty-one examine Tyvan music as a living tradition and it being supported and sustained within Tyva. Finally, question twenty-two asks what the participants believe to be the best way to support and sustain Tyvan music in the future as a living tradition.

Through field work and the second survey, I have come to understand that in 2022, Tyvan music is a sustainable and supported living tradition. Unlike other folk music education that I have explored specifically in Kazakhstan (fellow Turkic peoples) and Mongolia (having Turco-Mongolian traditions), there does not appear to be a standard K-12 curriculum for Tyvan khöömei. My initial thinking, probably gross naiveté, was that school music curriculum would have khöömei and Tyvan instrument classes in public education. This is not the case, rather, children are learning western classical music. Certainly, I am not demonizing the western classical tradition here, rather it is the colonial legacy of Tyva "joining" the Soviet Union in 1944.

Kazakhstan and Mongolia have the benefit of being independent nations after being under the influence of the Soviet sphere through much of the 20th century. Even the school that I

taught at in the largest municipal landfill in Ulaanbaatar, had several morin-khuurs, topshuurs and yatgas used for the students' music lessons. Similarly, the Kazakhstani government has a music education program on the national level that has archived Kazakh folk tunes and puts thousands of dombras into the hands of school children each year, not unlike the way in the United States students are issued recorders to play. With financial support, it would not be difficult to have classroom sets of doshpuluurs or igils, similar to what I observed while teaching in Mongolia.

Participants in the survey who self-identified as teachers of Tyvan music were split virtually evenly between two groups, the first believing that universities and public schools were indeed working to support and sustain Tyvan music as a living tradition now and for the future versus the second group who answered with variations of *"no", "unlikely"* and *"minimal"*. I see this primarily as a symptom of the ongoing colonial legacy in the former Soviet Union. Today, if we can be intellectually honest, the Tyvans are still a colonized minority population in the new Russian Federation, and are subject to federal education laws and curriculum.

Survey participants noted that there are special Tyvan music classes in public schools and Tyvan music degree programs at both Tyvan State University as well as the Kyzyl Arts College. In addition to the state education system, local cultural houses in both Kyzyl and kozhuuns, as well as the International Khöömei Academy all offer educational programs for students of all ages. While I did not have the correct travel visa to visit public schools and universities while in the field, I have since had the opportunity to attend, virtually, the children's annual Saradak khöömei festival and contest. Participation costs nothing for children. Both children's soloists and khöömei ensembles participate from all of the kozhuuns, and it is a testament to their teachers and villages that the music is very well supported for young musicians across the

Republic. After detailed analysis of survey data combined with two summers in the field, I can say with confidence that public schools and universities in Tyva are working diligently to keep Tyvan music a living tradition now and provide for a sustainable future of Tyvan khöömei as a living tradition.

Data collected from participants indicate great hope for the future of Tyvan music being placed in the hands of the new International Khöömei Academy which opened in 2021. While it is possible that the IKA will develop a standardized teaching methodology, I am unsure as to how successful this would be. Survey data indicate a varied methodology to teaching Tyvan khöömei and instruments. Some teachers continue the oral/aural model of learning, while others employ western notation. An updated collection of Askenov's 1964 collection of Tyvan songs, with transliterations and translations would certainly be of interest to scholars and listeners of Tyvan music.

A significant issue with any collection of folksongs is that western notation fails to represent the timbral nature of Tyvan music. In the west, music is pitch centered, where as in Tyvan music, it is the entire spectrum of timbres that Tyvans listen to. For example, Tyvan listeners would be tuned to hear the spectrum of tones produced an igil (played with both strings simultaneously always) and the voice of the khöömeizhi singing a kargyraa (Levin & Süzükei, 2006; Süzükei, 2017). I seriously wonder, how an étude can effectively capture the space occupied between the ground and the sky as well as the contours of the peaks to form a drone and melody in kargyraa style khöömei? This is not meant to discredit the work being done currently in Kyzyl, but rather to illustrate the complexities of Tyvan music and the task currently being tackled by the IKA. Use of western style notation is dependent on both sonic and visual images the student comes with.

Another significant challenge faced by the IKA is the perception of music training and who music is for and where it is learned. Tyvan folklore states that all can sing because melodies from birds and animals occupied the steppe and were absorbed by ancestors. Music is culturally believed to be in the DNA of the Tyvan people, and survey participants further differentiated music not being for *trained* musicians only. Predominately, Tyvans still learn khöömei at home or other spaces that are not classrooms as we might expect in the West. Still these days, khöömei is passed from elder, who is not necessarily a familial relationship, to student as a living oral/aural tradition.

Survey data indicate a solid support system dedicated to the sustainability of Tyvan music now and for future generations. Participants replied that the Tyvan government is either supportive of khöömei or can be supportive going forward if demonstrated that this support is in their best interests. I believe firmly it is in the interest of the Tyvan government to sustain and support khöömei for several reasons. Most importantly, khöömei, as earlier discussed, acts as a social binding agent for the Tyvan people. Field work from 2017-2019 across the Altai-Sayan confirmed that khöömei was a primary means of Tyvan manifesting who they are both inside the republic, and beyond the Sayan as well.

Participants also discussed that, while still in its infancy, Tyvan media and the burgeoning recording industry work closely with khöömeizhi to support and sustain their music. While current sanctions on technology imports into the Russian Federation are severely limiting what is available for purchase, the fact remains that media production and sound recording technologies have become increasingly democratized in the past twenty years. While mediums like Facebook and Instagram have been banned for “anti-Russian propaganda”, an entire post-Soviet generation is active online, behind a VPN, and spreading their music to a global audience.

Performing arts organizations in Tyva have an important role in support and sustainability of Tyvan music. Most of the performing arts organizations in Tyva are quasi-NGOs. While technically they are not run by the Tyvan government, the bulk of financial support these organizations need to survive comes from the Ministry of Culture. The relationship is generally not antagonistic between the ministry and performing arts organizations, especially under the previous tenure of khöömeizhi Aldar Tamdyn.

When it came to tourism supporting music, several participants responded that *music* supports tourism in Tyva. Should travel restrictions ease, the Tyvan government and Ministry of Economy needs to explore how to attract international cultural tourism as it will have a positive impact on the poor economic realities the Tyvan people face. I doubt at the Federal level, in the Kremlin, that there is significant interest in the general and economic well-being of the Tyvan people. While Putin and Shoigu enjoy their shirtless holidays in the Tyvan taiga, it appears that there is no direct benefit from this for the Tyvan people. Racism against non-whites in Russia is well documented and a reality of life the Tyvan people encounter outside their homeland as well as inside from white Russians (Levin & Süzükei, 2006). Based on observations from in person field work, the economic state of the Republic is dire, and for better or worse, economic investment and development lays in the hands of the Tyvan people. I have wanted to ask about this for years now, but the topic is so sensitive, I fear alienating mentors and friends inside Tyva. Music based tourism, has the potential for significant financial investment in a post-Putin, or at least post-sanctioned Tyva.

Data collected in these twenty-two questions support existing literature related to music and modern Tyvan identity (Beahrs, 2014; Mongush, 2006). In addition to supporting existing literature, qualitative data collected in the second survey contributes to the understanding of the

broader role of music, modern Tyvan identity and folksong transmission in the Republic of Tyva. These new contributions were made possible by forty-four participants giving of their time to tell their stories and give their opinions. Presentation of their answers was done with all due respect and consideration for what they deemed important to share.

New Theory

Based on field work and survey data, I have concluded the following about the role of music in modern Tyvan identity and propose a new understanding of khöömei, transmission of folksong and modern Tyvan identity. *Tyvans are inextricably bound to their land, and that both Tyvan vocal, and Tyvan instrumental music act as a cognitive bridge that connects the Tyvans to their ancestors in Pre-Soviet nomadic life as well as ensuring the continuity of Tyvan culture into the future.* Voice and music are extremely embodied forms of memory that tie modern Tyvans and modern Tyvan identity to their ancestors and ancestral lands. Essentially, as long as there are Tyvans on earth, khöömei will ensure the multi-millennia old culture survives, regardless of contemporary political pressures.

Recently, a colleague in Tyva and I were discussing an upcoming trip to the *aal* (wilderness). Staying in a yurt, speaking Tyvan exclusively, singing Tyvan songs, visiting a shaman, and cooking Tyvan food, in their opinion, is a way of reaffirming that they are, in fact, Tyvan people. While eschewing the current political difficulties, and not discussing this dissertation project, a brief call between two friends informally summarized the descriptive findings of this dissertation project.

Future Research

When it is possible to return to Tyva, it is my intention to continue to study issues of use and function of Tyvan music. Gaining the correct travel visa to visit schools to observe and

participate in khöömei classes would further the study of folksong transmission in Tyva. Further, the *use* of music in Tyva was not part of this dissertation project, but does need to be studied in the future. My professional khöömeizhi colleagues use music for income, but future ethnographic work certainly could explore how khöömei is used to manifest a sense of being Tyvan in the 21st century to the world beyond the Sayan, as well as use of music in animal husbandry in Todzhu with the reindeer herders or those keeping herds of camels in Erzin.

Finally, there is a large cluster of nomadic ethnic Tyvan herders and nomads in the northwest provinces of Mongolia, specifically in Tsengel Sum and the population area in Bayan Ölgii. This dissertation can and should be replicated amongst these Tsengel Tyvans to compare to results from their cousins north of a man made border. I am currently planning field work in Tsengel Sum for the summer of 2023.

Implications for Music Education in the United States

Fundamentally, this dissertation project has been an exercise in empathy and better understanding the Tyvan people. Due to Tyva being a homogenous republic, teaching and learning of Tyvan vocal music and Tyvan instrumental music, or as I have heard it referred to as "national music" or "national instruments" is engrained in the population. Our classrooms here in the United States are increasingly heterogenous and the future of our profession needs to look towards a more global concept of music and music education. I personally have the fortune of residing in the largest city in the United States where there are literally hundreds of languages and cultures are represented each day in our schools and streets. That is the brilliant thing about the United States. Our nation is more of a concept than a certain race or ethnicity. We all come from somewhere else, even the indigenous peoples of North America once came from the Altai-

Sayan region of Inner-Asia, as confirmed by genetic studies (Dulik et al., 2012; Starikovskaya et al., 2005). For the most part, we all get along and go about our lives.

The question music educators should ponder is how to create a responsive and empathetic classroom that embraces our diverse populations. I think that is must go beyond programming in our ensembles. It is obvious that representation matters and ensemble literature is moving in that direction. Chance's 1967 "Variations on a Korean Folk Song" was an important step in this direction. The composer was inspired by his time in Korea, and brought that folk song home to share with a broader audience. However, that was over fifty years ago, and teachers today cannot be intellectually honest and say programming works like this creates a culturally responsive and empathetic classroom.

This dissertation project is also an exercise in grounded theory based on data collected in the field and at home via Qualtrics survey software. Any of the questions I posed in the second long form survey can be used by colleagues in K-12 or higher education. Asking your students about early musical memories, what is meaningful to them, what is useful to them or their prior music learning experiences allows the educator to begin creating an empathetic space not only in the classroom, but also signaling to our students that we do in fact care about them and the musics that are meaningful in their lives. At this point in music education and ethnomusicology research, it has been well established the field can be equally both your classroom or the Center of Asia.

As we better understand our students' lives and musics, we can educate and challenge their musical sensibilities, while at the same time challenging our own ears and making the classroom a more collaborative space than benevolent dictatorship. The goal of opening the classroom to diverse musics should not be increasing participation, but rather a side effect of

students understanding you value and respect what is important in their lives. I practice this daily in my own teaching in the South Bronx. Taking the time to up my rap game (vernacular of my students) and showing that vulnerability by performing with them has resulted in my students being open to learning some kargyraa and sygyt from the Center of Asia. While these relationships and openness to try new musics cannot be assessed at an annual NYSSMA (New York State School Music Association) festival, I would like to ask my peers if once the students move on to their next school or educational experience, do trophies and certificates mean anything?

The final implication for music education in the United States that needs to be addressed is ensembles. We are still very much in the large performing ensemble paradigm, which is critically important, but may not be a sustainable cornerstone in the future for a myriad of reasons. It is critical for the music educator to understand the lives and lived experience of their students if the music program is to be sustainable. This might require viewing the K-12 music curriculum as a wheel with multiple spokes versus a single monolith a la Kubrick's "2001: A Space Odyssey".

Band, choir and strings will always be spokes on the wheel, however, adding additional smaller ensembles that speak to the heterogenous diversity in our schools needs to be a collaborative discussion amongst researchers, teacher training programs and K-12 educators with equal voice. While this has the potential to be a difficult conversation, it needs to be addressed. Much like the Tuvan Cultural Center and International Khöömei Academy in Kyzyl that are actively supporting youth and adult education in Tyvan vocal music and Tyvan instrumental music, there are organizations in the United States doing similar work. NAFME/MENC have shown successful outreach to our Hispanic students with mariachi programs. The International

Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA) has seen similar success in training teachers and supporting school bluegrass music ensembles in areas of the United States where bluegrass and old time fiddle music is meaningful in the daily life of our students. With support from teacher training programs, special interest/advocacy groups, and a willingness to try something new beyond the monolith, we absolutely have the potential to reinvigorate music programs in the United States.

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Appendix A

IRB Approval Letter

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

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Office of Research
Institutional Review Board

EXEMPT DETERMINATION

May 23, 2018

Dear Clint Taylor:

On 5/23/2018, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title of Study:	Folk Music Education in the Republic of Tuva
Investigator:	Clint Taylor
Co-Investigator:	Damon Postle
IRB ID:	STUDY00006149
Funding:	None
Review Category:	Exempt Flex 7

The IRB approved the protocol from 5/23/2018 to 5/22/2023.

Please close this study when it is complete.

In conducting this study, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

Kate Pavich, IRB Analyst
Human Subjects Office, University of Georgia

Appendix B

Long-Form Questionnaire Questions in Order as Presented to Participants.

Adapted from Schippers (2010, p. 173-174)

Can you tell me something about your own musical history?
Ты могли бы рассказать что-нибудь про историю вашей музыки?
What is the first time you heard xöömei?
Когда Ты в перТый раз услышали хоомей?
Did you train in other music besides Tuvan music?
Занимались ли Ты другой музыкой, помимо тувинской?

Where did you learn Tuvan music Где Ты учили тувинскую музыку?
Individual instruction? Было ли это индивидуальным обучением?
Part of a community in which music is made in daily lives? Какой частью сообщества, какими людьми создаётся музыка в повседневной жизни?

How did you learn Tuvan Music? Как Ты обучались тувинской музыке?
By rote? Прослушиванием и пением?
From a teacher? Вам помогал учитель?
Did you use notation? Использовали ли Ты ноты?

Do you teach Tuvan Music? Ты преподаете сами тувинскую музыку?
By rote or notation? С использованием нот или только прослушиванием?
Why do you teach? Почему Ты преподаёте?

Is it important that people teach Tuvan Music? Важно ли то, что люди преподают Тувинскую музыку?

What does it mean to you when you perform/teach Tuvan Music? Какое значение для вас имеет исполнение/преподавание тувинской музыки?

How do you feel about Tuvan music? Как Ты относитесь к тувинской музыке?

Is it regimented, or evolving? Музыка находится в застое или развивается?

What do you consider authentic Tuvan music? Что Ты считаете подлинной тувинской музыкой?

What place/role does Tuvan music have in Tuva? Какое место имеет тувинская музыка в Туве?

In contemporary culture? В современной культуре?

In Tuvan history? В тувинской истории?

What will the role of Tuvan music be in 5, 10, and 20 years from now? Каким будет тувинская музыка через 5, 12 и 20 лет?

Is the music a living tradition and being sustained for the future and supported? Является ли музыка жизненной традицией, которая сохранится и будет поддерживаться в будущем?

By the Tuvan government?Будет ли помощь от правительства Тыва?

Performing arts organizations? От организаций исполнительного искусства?

From Tuvan media or recording industry? Поддержка от медиа ТуТы или индустрии звукозаписи?

Tourism? Поддержка от туризма?

Universities and public schools? От Университетов и школ?

How do you envision the best way of creating a sustainable future for your music? Как бы Ты представили лучший способ создания надёжного будущего для вашей музыки?