

## ***The End of a Belle Epoque,***

*a short companion to the history of a russian pop-music in 1998 – 2007.*

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## **The end of a belle époque.**

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## Chronology, and the big waves.

Some tells there is a big waves in technology, or economy. It calls Kondratiev cycles. It has own growth and decline. Using this analogy I'll explain you periods of russian music. In russian music periods not so long, but they are obvious, because they are so bright. And after a few years of lush blossom, then there is nothing at all.

Now there is nothing interesting in russian pop music. The level of current degradation is incredible. Artists sing old songs over and over again. And there is nothing new, nothing at all. No one try to write. No one new appears. Of cause in official scene it is always mortal still, but it used to be that new pop rock artists appeared nevertheless. They had not needed even an effective medium such as show bussiness, in order to one day be played everywhere.

By the way there is no show business in russian federation, and one hardly ever been earlier. But this obstacle never had hindered new great russian pop or rock music from coming into existence. As a matter of fact some sort of show business had began to spread through the last cycle.

And now it's time for me to tell you what the last cycle was. It was legendary time. The greatness which we can see from distance.

We can pin the begining of the last cycle at year 1998. It is not precise, but it is very convenient in russian federation to take this particular date. It was year of "Default" then goverment had denounce state bonds, and prices had leaped from three to tenfold. And with all this the Yeltsin's drunk debauch ruling began to dissipate, the economy had turned upward, and people had started to live as if they were the normal middle class.

Before turning to events in russian music that mark the begining of new cycle, let me show you that there was another waves in music. So this demonstration is necessary to prove that we has tides and ebbs in our model. The penultimate summit of russian music occured in late eighties – early nighties. Perestroika, glasnost, and freedom begot the gush of new music in country. That was the years of glory of the Russian rock – *Kino*, *Nautilus Pompilius*. The Neformal (not formal) culture was hundred times more popular than whatever remains from regular show business – *Sector Giza*. The pop music had appeared as multifaceted as never before – *Laskovyi May*, *Kombinatzia*, *Gazmanov*. Even the hip-hop had made false start – *Kar-men*, *Malchishnik*. And all was over in hardly five or seven years. We can name the last album, that is the 1994's *Opium* by *Agata Cristi*.

And then a long silence fall upon a russian music scene for the long period of time. It was the worst years for the country as well. The peoples were swindled by privatisation. The Great Russia was fell apart, and lost Ukraine, Belarus, North Kazakhstan and some other territories populated by russians. And Soviet Union peoples became citizens of bastard Russian Federation, instead of real country.

So either the early enthusiasm had vapoured or everybody had sagn all that she wants, the thing is this wave had abruptly stoped. One or two years later every song that was so popular just yesterday sensed as it was from decades ago.

That another rule – after a wave has passed away, immediately every songs and artists that belongs to one became completely obsolete. The first rule, if you hasn't noticed, is that waves exist, there is sequence of a silence and a creation, of a disgrace and an elevation.

So the wave we take into consideration arose circa 1998, and in 2007 there was its last summer. We have nine years of great russian music to acquaint with.

In following chapters we will study that great era. Every chapter has its leading artist, by whom I can demonstrate the features, bugs, and characteristic of russian music and the big wave. Here we have all grand figures of the epoch, also I added some typical one. I must fess up I love them all, and it doesn't lead to any bias cause it was the Belle epoque, and all you need to know about it is here.



## Prophets. *Ivanushki International*.

They were not your typical boys' band. It may seem what can be easier, take from the west show business any working model as *Backstreet Boys* and apply. But there is no evidence that someone ever tried it and succeeded in a Russian pop-music. Why it happens, let's see.

At first glance there was every needed ingredient. The group was produced by prominent show business figure, *Igor Matvienko* during previous wave he created such stars as *Zhenya Belousov* and *Lube*. His industrious approach included standard search for future group members through audition of young singers, dancers, and entertainers. First song was cover of well-known song. But that all didn't work in a way it's supposed to.

Young boys had occurred to be grown men. They got a vast life experience. It used to be the source of many inner jokes that they are presumed to be boys. So they were to listening them young adults a very very old brothers. Second, there was only three of them, it is hardly enough for a boys' band. The time of four-five disposable members' of short living groups would come eventually but many years later. And finally, who the hell in boys' band would commit suicide, and one of them really did it.

So first appearance with cover song was not so bad, not so good either. It was song and style from previous wave, and it looked oddly obsolete, as always happens with songs from terminated waves. The real new beginning was the song *Tuchi*. They described it as a trip-hop.

From this point all goes more bright. They never took the first place, but they were always here, and it will not be true to say that some groups superseded them. They had outlived many. They never really changed their style, and there is no sense to distinguish one album from another. They released song in smooth pace, mostly at summer. Or it was summer, that suits them so well, that now we attribute them to this season.

So indispensable songs for listening are *Gde-to*, *Kukla*, *Topolinyi Puh*.

Why they were prophets, but not the kings. They were first in time, they showed that there is something more bright than a mundane middle nineties. So they were the light but not these who bask in it. As a backdrop they create the scene for the new wave. The group lasts long time almost as long as the wave itself.

The ideal surrounding for listening their music is an afternoon at early summer season, not lazy sveltering, but fresh and verdant. It is not for sober solitude or seclusion, it rather for social gathering. The ideal occasion to turn it on to the higher volume is state fair.

It is child friendly, the music and a group members. As a matter of fact one of them was a host of show for children, and it works for him and for the show. If your kid like it, he or she is ok. But if your teenager listen it, this isn't normal, cause it's too mainstream.

The music texture of songs is very very good, practically excellent for pop-music, the *Igor Matvienko* doesn't do bad things. The texts is easy to remember, but it is gibberish as a pop-music's lyrics always are.

Now let's return to the question why *Ivanushki International* hadn't become your typical boys' band, thirty third copy of world-known examples. The big wave is always an original stuff. There is no way for coasting on something second-hand or old, it would contradict the basic principles, we'd previously talked about. The proportion between mediocrity and genius between cycles may differ.

In this case there was more pure genius.

And the russians has a great culture so they can create a new worlds.



## Kings. *Ruki Vverh*.

I had first seen them in an open convertible, gliding at light May day through not so well trimmed street of mid-nineties Moscow. Years had gone from 1993 October riot, and years remained to the 1998 Default. There was warm, still, and not happiness but the sense in the air that may be all bad is behind and something good is somewhere on the way.

So two guys come to the capital and started a group. What does the music group means? It must be cool and funny. Then why don't begin to write cool and funny music, go to night clubs, get surrounded by splendid girls, buy convertible, paint it polka dot, and running around the town. They were simple guys and walked a straight path. Want to be the best band, be it. Also they might have been geniuses. But how many geniuses get to the top.

It must be remembered that in Russian Federation three kind of a pop-music exist. First official scene, they don't need your pity money they got their huge allowance right from the government. It is scared how absolutely without any talents they might be. They sing old, boring, disgusting stuff nobody likes. Official concerts and television is staffed with them in order to prevent any rising of a level of a culture, because Russian Federation's government hates and fears Russians.

Second type of pop-music, let's call it show business, does actually try to make money by singing songs. They produce groups and artists. If it happens that artist is actually fitted to the tastes of a public, they would go on very intense tours to all cranes and nooks of the country. If the product staled they sell it to the government to be the first kind of pop-music.

And the third type of Russian pop-music, it is something that people really heavy listen. It's on everybody's playlists. Car's mixtapes consist of it. Local night clubs play it all night and local small shops all day. People love it. We appreciate good music. Very often this kind of records are produced by genius himself. Russians are very good musicians. If good musician coincides with good businessman, he or she would make some money, but it is fifty-fifty.

*Ruki Vverh* was not the one of these types. They were from nowhere and enormously good in composing megahits. They were not opposite to the current pop-scene they were completely another scene. And that scene become the main one. So they build their own show business, with best clips and mad roaring concerts. They waive the official pop scene and regular show business. They are not only loved, they're respected as well. They were not only their own man, they begets disciples, later we will talk about these groups too.

So they are kings. The duet dynamic was classic, *Sergei Zhukov* was leader and there was also *Aleksei Potehin*. *Serezha Zhukov* was super cute.

As *Ivanushki*'s wrong first song, their first clip would have nothing to do with them. Real first hit was *Student*. By the way in case of *Ruki Vverh* you should see clips, cause every second of them is great too, they got best girls in their video.

Indispensable hits are *Student*, *Kroshka moya*, *Doma ne sidi*, *Nu gde zhe vy devchonki*, *Luchshii paren*, *Stoyat podruzhki*, *Vypusknoi*, *Tancuyut vse*.



## Girls power 1: Juggernaut. *Tatu*.

*Tatu* was the only one who could make it abroad. All you know this duo. Two girls in their adolescence demonstrate deep emotional connection between them to the degree of making out. Of course only on stage and in clips, in real life they are straight. Nevertheless it's a strong say for the cause of nonconventional sexual life, in sense of early sexuality and attraction to the same sex.

And it had not been perceived that way at all. The average listener seen only two very appealing girl who sang energetic songs. Let's see how it happened.

First of all there are two of them, so what they can sing about. It is pop music therefore it mostly about a love. But to sing about a love to one guy for both of them simultaneously it seems stupid. To sing about a love to the masculinity in general it is a prerogative for three-four-five members girls' bands, which always cry it out loud. So for the sake of reason they should perform the emotional tension between them as all duos do.

Second, the average listener was young adult male human being. This creature sees what he want to see, i.e. girls on scene want so much to do it too, great, no further concerns.

Third the group was as much visual as audio experience. The first song was great, in the same time it was also revolutionary clip, the pinnacle of 2000's *MTV*, it called *Ya Soshla s Uma*. *Tatu* was the group of one album, but the album was perfect in every track. So indispensable listening – *200 Po strechnoy*.

So to conclude this part of the story there was not such kind of group in the world before them. So russians first invent this concept and made it real with genius agility. They found the path between scylla and charybdis. They were too young so if they were into boys they'd meet a slut shame, so they were into each other, but only in such a young age it seems not a big deal, cause who knows what the hell in young girl's mind really is.

So the country conquered, the album's tracks are on a playlist of every guy of age 14 – 24, what else. It is hard to say if there was any ways to successfully proceed the same or slightly change themes. But eighteen happens only once. They disappeared very quickly as a puberty itself. But that short blowing mind period always stays with.

Something else should be said anyway. It is about the perception of a freedom, or a real freedom that occurs at this period. There was no government intrusion in show business or pop culture for some years, the patriotic obligation that influence the artist's creativity always results in lame product. Moral preaching from pop star is also ridiculous. Then there was no need for artists to be saying right things, since there is no watchdog for some years either. So there is no constraints to try a new things.

From the other hand the show business was not yet fully developed, so these new things could appear at the top level of pop culture. The case of *Tatu* get across this idea very well. They couldn't have been marginal, or in the mainstream or not at all. They could exist only on big scene, if it'd been a niche product it would be a not so good niche to say the least. In this short period they can go big, and they've achieved the blissfully overwhelming success, made so many listeners happy and slightly better.

The absence of these two bad obstacles, first, the government's and watchdog's influence, and second, the ossified state of show business, had coincided and it produced the new wave of fresh artists, whom we studied in this book.

The freedom is essential for russian art. If it is, all would be.



## Girls power 2: Young boys' favorite. *Propaganda*.

What really is young adult listening. What are they adoring. We are talking about boys in their early twenties, about students. Heavy metal is behind in middle school, and rock in high school, it's a niches. What struck a cord with them en masse.

In the very beginning of 2000s it happens to be group *Propaganda*. Their lyrics was so intense and enticing that they instigated to do what they were singing of. They'd sang I am drawing on asphalt with chalk the word enough, and six huge letters appeared under the windows of dorms. That was the real power stuff.

They got the source of charming power. They were not attractive at all, may be even opposite, tomboy, slightly chubby girl, and the girl with r-sound speech defect, three ordinary girls. To watch their clips is a complete waste of time. And I never heard of someone who experienced romantic thoughts about them. For example for *Tatu*'s leader drooled every second boy at the same time.

So the magic was lyric and the magic was music. Before we start explanation. Let's see the discography of the group. The group was long-lived one, and it had been changing all the time. First chubby one ousted tomboy and defect speech's, then she took in two pretty dancer girls, but it hadn't added no attractiveness at all. Second, the group occured to be prolific one, and issued five or six albums the great one is only first, but it is rare, that following wasn't complete disaster and had one or two good songs each. It might be saying that *Propaganda* had two periods in its art, first boy's dreams album, and second good solid pop music albums that ensued.

Indispensable listening is first album *Detki* all tracks, then single songs *Holodno*, *Dozhd po Krysham*, *Quanta Costa*, *Mari i Huan*, and super energy charged girls' hymn *Odni Doma*.

The *Propaganda* is the youth itself. That's day dreaming about all merry little things that you would do with your soulmate, boyfriend or girlfriend, you hasn't had one yet, but you will, it is absolutely sure, then you are twenty, and the sky is blue, and the grass is green, you haven't got to bed in time yesterday, so today it's absolutely impossible to come to the sections, but it doesn't matter at all, cause there are beauty and happiness in the world, somewhere, or around the corner, or frankly speaking right now.

Russians are very sentimental.

The student is a perfect human beign, he is young, strong, smart, it assumes a chunk of an arrogance, but is it a bad thing, when it is accompanied with a sense of beautiful and an earning for a fairness. So to prevent a world destruction or at least a local total destroy, as it seems from the point of view of old boring oldlings, the life of young adults is laden with admissions, attendance, finals, rooting for crimson tides and other fillings. Russian students' life is even more hard cause it include four-five peers in room accommodation, cooking for oneself, and hand washing of clothes, and also of cause the constant pressing from russian federation's government.

But that's the minor hiccups to feel happy, this is well illustrated in song *Holodno* (Cold). And there is no reason to stay home at night instead of walking around the dorm in a loud crowd.

### Girls power 3. For advanced listeners. *Minnet*.

The name of this group is unknown to the most listeners even in Russia. But the music is known for everyone at least some songs. The matter of fact that for the first their hits they borrowed music from composers such as *Mozart*, *Beethoven*. It were full-fledged covers, for example of *Ode to Joy*.

The lyrics were completely original storytelling about everyday life of high school girls from below average neighborhood, boys and their consequences. By the way in Russian Federation there is no neighborhood, everybody live in the same ugly apartment buildings, side by side.

So it was unexpected mix of immortal classic tunes and ordinary young girls problem`s. And they really managed to pull it off. They escaped the comical effect it might had produced, and come across a dramatic impression of an eternal beauty of the classic and the youth.

It really worked for the classic is spiritual but the youth is not totally unheavenly as well. The background was as mundane as it might be, an urban outskirts of a big city. The lyrics and the sets of clips implied some degree of social ill-beign at the same time. But it darkened nothing.

As we may see *Minnet* apply contradictions wherever it could. It wasn`t a fight between the good and evil. However they always exactly marked what they thought right. It rather was the struggle itself in all its glory, that shone as a precious gem in every song. There is a hope, until we resist.

To worsen the path to success they applied the contradiction method to themselves. The group of young girls took as a name a phrase *Minnet* (there is no landmines) that sounds pretty like blowjob in Russian. The first album was named *PeaceDa* (yes to the peace) that is vulgar name for vagina.

Indispensable listening is classic`s covers *PeaceDa*, *Eto Ne Znaet Nikto* and *Vse Budet Horosho*, and other staff *Sudnyi Den*, *Mama*, *Prosti Proshchai*. There is no need to seek for any clips, cause they didn`t achieved the stage then they could afford good video.

So they issued an album, one clip was on *MTV*, later here and there gossips spreaded about new album, even appeared some new songs. But it was over before the start. All that stays is a beautiful juxtaposition of Vienna`s geniuses and Russian urban girls who almost outsang them.

They ended up pretty bad. If you try so hard to do everything in opposite matter, you may succeed. Have started wearing no pants on scene, they hadn`t much where to go further. Starting as outliers they very quickly prompted themselves to complete expulsion.

So it is a good lesson, how you shouldn`t behave on stage. First of all put on some clothes, nobody wants to see your underwear. Good artist must have good costume. An attire must be original or fashionable. A human beign should be beautiful in every way, face, clothes, mind and soul.

Second stop talking like cobbler or sailor or whomever your culture refer to as an obscene sexually charged bad mouth. It isn`t cute. It doesn`t shock. It is perceived like a plain offense out of blue. It breaks any communication between artist and public.

Russians not so hypocrite as they really don`t like some thing. They are aware of an existence of nudity or obscenity. And there is an appropriate time and place for either of them. If you are going for breaking rules nobody would stop you, there would be no preaching or haranguing.

Public just took a step back and watched them falling. The music was light, the lyric was darker. The lyric outweighed the music and the group flied down an abyss, that's the magic power of russian words.



Always second. *Otpetye moshenniki*.

What is it to be always second. Of course somebody is needed to be second. But to be always second, to be done as a second. That is great too. Then the wave's high, second means far beyond mediocrity. *Otpetye moshenniki* were in a shadow. You are just the next to the top, but nobody knows your name as if you were twenty second. So their style was an average next door boys gang, one was the pretty cute lad, with whom you may want to have funny business, one was the funny big dude, and one was slim weasel type of guy, so average crush, destroy, and sleazy. In other words one team, they perfectly dovetailed each other.

Music was average as well, there were hits, but not masterpiece. They were fillings, not the main course. And they honestly did what was needed. It is impossible for radio or television to air the best of the best emotionally charged megahits all hour long. There is necessity for a break, a pause, a backdrop between heaps. It was good pop fodder for stuffing any longevity. It would be mistake to think about them as not good pop, they were very good but for another purpose. Indispensable listening is all that would pop-up at search or request.

So what's the point. The matter of fact is that intense, emotionally involved listening of music may last for forty minutes, in some occasion for an hour, but no more than an hour and a half in any case. By the way it's a standard for various classical music's forms and genres. But situations where the music must sound longer is in an abundance. Above mentioned radio and television for example. Is their music was good enough for party or dancing, absolutely.

Local dance clubs began to appear in the country at the same period as the big wave had come. They were the new places. Where the Saturday's night fever had happened before. In Soviet Union it was houses that were ruled by local government officials that hosted the dancing evenings for young workers, clerks and others. There young men and women could meet each other in a pleasant, joyful atmosphere of the weekend's evening. Then Union had gone its system fell apart as well. There were ten or more years then there weren't an entertainment of such kind at all. School dances existed at school, parties have been thrown at dorm halls, but all this wasn't a dance club to meet someone new.

So the local dance club as it represents itself in ideal. It locates in a basement, there is no windows, there is no doors, one space combines all, first of all the dance floor, then the bar with bartenders men or women, then the tables where the companies may sit, then a play zone with billiards. That is really enough for the perfect evening.

Head toward the club not long before the midnight, take a nap and supper before and be well groomed. To entrance you buy tickets, its cost ranges from one to three beers. You leave your coats and enter the club. Take a shot (fifty milliliters) or two of vodka, order a beer (half liter), then be sitting at the bar while drinking your beer and embracing the mood of the evening. After your spirits has raised go and dance, it will three to five fast song followed by one or two slow one. During the slow you should dance in pair or go to the bar to raise your confidence, usually guys invite girls to dance but you also may be so cute or stupid so a girl would take the rein. Then take the table to make new company or join the existing one. Order snacks and jugs. Repeat in it any sequences and enjoy it. You should leave the club short after three a.m. So good luck.

Well can you endure three hour of divine perfect music. No way. Should music be bad, why if Russian pop can easily deliver you thirty three our of very good music. The music should be decent, not disturbing, even if it's disturbingly elevating, rather entertaining. No need to cast out the first range groups or compositions, but between them should sounds the seconds. And it brings the harmony to the music experience. The big wave of Russian pop music we are talking about was a finely balanced, with its firsts, seconds, and as we see later even with tertiary groups.

## Kings of summer. *S.T.D.K.*

Had summer happened twice a year, we would have twice more megahits. Bad years occur, but not more often than in an agriculture. So this song blasts out of every speakers. It repeats at party as many times as djs change each other. And even the faint sound of it enough to turn mind on repeat mode for a whole day. Indeed, it is a pestilence as much as a blessing.

This summer fever exists in russian pop music. Every respected group must have wrote a hit, then the season come, or it would be passed. There is another tour de force, however it is not so common obligation as a summer hit, but if you at the top of show business this year you owe us a christmas single as well.

In order to make an acquaintance with such a phenomenon I chose the group *S.T.D.K.* and their megahit *Vot Leto Proletelo*. Since the group had falled in an oblivion just right after the summer ended, and never popped-up again, it make a pure case without inclusions. You don't need to know anything about the group as I do, except an indispensable listening of one song.

So let's look at basics. Summer hit must be joyful and bright. There is no way that gloomy and moody song immerse all country in a depression just because it so infinitely beautiful. Sad song would strike people one by one. The summer hit swoop all at once. No need to promote this song, it promotes itself. Arrived from nowhere it is aired on every station next week.

The only lyrics that matters is chorus. The verses may be gibberish and nonsense, nobody listen between choruses, it is better for them to be short and unobservable, their only purpose in giving a moment to refill the breast with air, in order to cry out loud the chorus as if it was the end of the days. The chorus must be unforgettable, that all that stays after all.

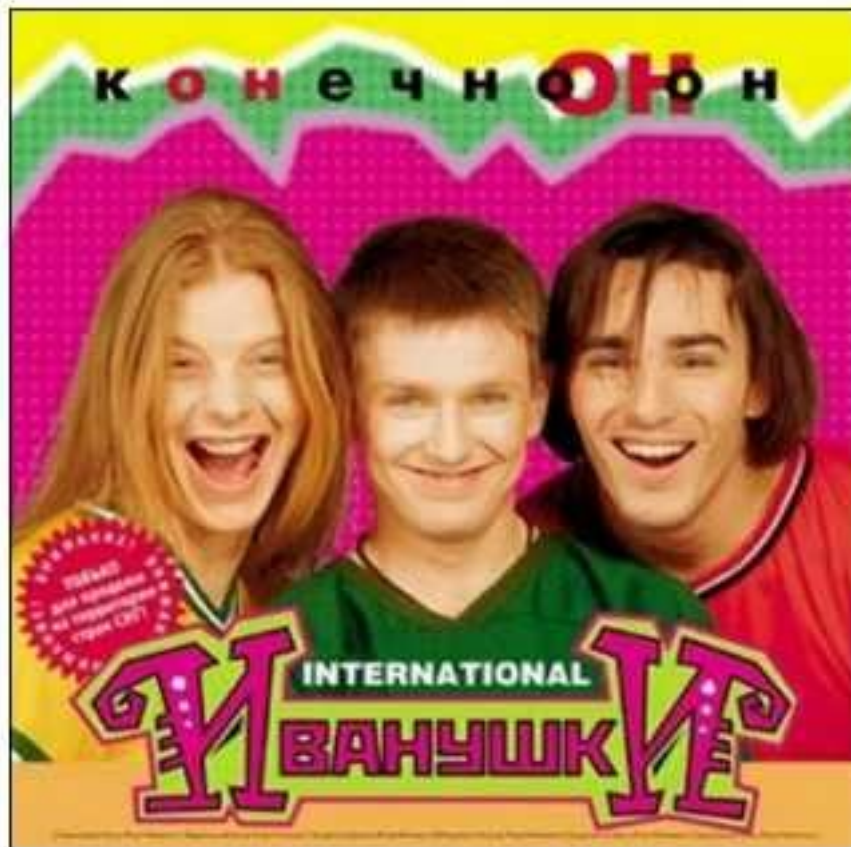
Third, it must be danceable. The good test is kids. They catch the tune before others, unconsciously and irreversibly. If summer campers obsessed with it, it's time for dj's to prepare mixes for the winter. It'll make a good conclusion for the fast sets in clubs. If you can jump and sing simultaneously at your song, good chance you got a summer hit.

So it's everywhere, but where it must be in the first place. Open air concerts and festivals. About festivals we will learn later, there are not many but some good ones. Let's talk about open air concerts. I saw live performance of *S.T.D.K.* at one of these events. It must be early june's summer then. It was too far from scene, so I don't know how they look like, may be it for the better.

So open air concerts. First of all it's an official event, consequently it occurs on holidays, when celebrated some stupid date. It free for all, and only a government has enough taxpayers money to pay artists. It is a good occasion to see a bunch of popular singers and groups in one place, so to use these favorable circumstances gathers a big crowd.

On central square puts up a big stage. The program begins at the morning and lasts through to fireworks. It consists of four parts child's dance studios, non-professional artists, local artists, official artists (we learned about three kinds of pop music earlier), and popular group and singers. As the day goes to dawn the firsts reduce and the lasts increase their presense on stage.

Open air concerts are good on the early summer fresh day. Enjoy the music, enjoy the mood of the crowd, escape strangers, it's not the place to meet new people, come with someone if you need a company. At the good concert you may sing out loud and the good one happens almost each time. *Vot leto proletelo* was a good song charged with careless happiness of a beginning of a summer. An open air concert differs from other types of concerts, like concert at a club or a stadium. And summer single differs from regular album's stuff.



**РУКИ** **ВВЕРХ**

КРИТИЧЕСКИ УСПЕШНЫЙ  
НАЦИОНАЛЬНЫЙ ПРОЕКТ  
GR 00080813  
Grand Report  
Руки вверх!

**МНЕ С ТОБОЮ ХОРОШО**



Everybody can write a one song. *Dj Dozhdik*.

So you want to write a fugue. It was a short composition by *Glenn Gould*, derided non-professional musicians. But truth is everybody can do anything at very decent level, only one time but nevertheless. I.e. if you want to draw a picture, do it, if you want to write a song, go ahead. You need only desire to accomplish a pretty good piece of art. But there is a restriction it works only once. If you feel an urge, you'll write a good poem, but it will not make you a poet. It is a one time thing. A blessing to create a beautiful things given to every human being. A talent to make a good things more than once is given to few, and talented can earn living from it. And a genius to make it as easy as a breath appears seldom and random. Money is good but for the genius this really not a big deal, the man or woman talks with god, what for him or her these earthy matters.

Well, *Dj Dozhdik* he's kind of ordinary guy who borrowed a talent for one moment and composed the genuine song *Pochemu zhe Pochemu zhe Dozhdik Kapaet po Luzham*. It is indispensable listening to see what a touch of a genuity, about which we've talked so lengthy, means.

So what we has to do with that. First, how it relates to the big wave. When the music culture on the rise, collecting, dealing with, and creating a pop music become popular, and more people try to do something in it, since every man or woman can produce one good song, the amount of good song, especially from some ones whom nobody knows, steeply increases. By the way the number of genius is constant, so it is rather, they disappear between waves than appear on a peak.

Second, the popularity. It is one time thing, so there would be no albums, no concerts. The official part of pop music or the show business part doesn't deign to this sort of artists. Then how do they become very famous, for the real good one ends blasting out at every dance club.

How music spreads without government corruption and show business propulsion. It turns to be that the leading role in this process belongs to younger generation. Generally it is not hard to figure out. Perhaps everywhere the youth skip forward old music to find out their tunes.

But I'm gonna tell you the absolute unique way that exist only in Russia. That thing's called *KVN*. That's the competition between two or more teams on stage. They perform a short sketches, the funnier team gets higher score from the jury of judges, who gets more points wins. That happens before viewers who buy tickets to this events. Teams belong to various universities, and consist of students.

*KVN* is a really big thing on campuses. There is no college sport in Russia, there is no greek life. The *KVN* team of the university is its varsity. Members of team are local stars as a college football athletes. The game is a huge event. And teams are gathered together in a bunch of leagues, there are seasons and a final game as well.

Frankly speaking it is easy to write a book about *KVN* as thick as about a pop music. So let's cut to the chase. How *KVN* and spreading of pop music is strongly connected.

Almost every sketch has its musical background. Even if the sketch is just a talk at the end must be a musical punch line it calls *otbivka*. As a performance the team's play on stage must entertain an audience so it includes many songs, e.g. final song. Since the members of teams are youngsters they always bring new melodies to the game. We don't know where they dig out new songs, the youth has own channels. But since the part of song appears on stage as an *otbivka*, the audience if like it can search the original, download it, and spread the word farther.

As a matter of fact, many songs from artist who has only one genuine song disseminate that way. *Dj Dozhdik*, *Dj Alezhka* become popular after been used by popular *KVN* team.

Even more interesting that the Big Wave in *KVN* itself, with great teams and legendary sketches, coincided with the Big Wave in pop music, it was the same 1998 – 2007. We can assume that is not the coincidence in no way.



Tertiary. *Sveta*.

*Sveta* was immensely popular among lay people. There is songs that are aired all day on radio, their clips are rotated on tv. There is another songs that are appreciated by music aficionados, they complete the collection of melomaniacs. *Sveta*'s songs were neither one of these two types. There is officially promoted songs by means of government power, there is show business backed songs by means of money. *Sveta* was neither of these either.

That happens in the Russian Federation that good stuff finds no way to the top. For officially propelled art it may be too good, since the government aim is that that the Russian art may exist only if it provokes barfing. And show business has its motto we no need your money.

But the *Sveta*'s case is more interesting than this mundane reality. Cause it unexpectedly and apparently involved a class motive. By knowing that someone is a fan of *Sveta* you can conclude to which social strata he or she belongs.

She was popular among working class youth without higher education. So the students cringe their noses if her songs were played at parties. For music buffs she did not exist. To show business producers she fell between targeted groups.

But what the heck these were really good songs. You may listen *Sineglazye Delfiny*, *Chto Mne delat*, *Chto Ty Budesh Delat* and many others.

You may think I exaggerate it, but the fact is, it was the last artist whose albums distributed on audio cassettes, that proof low social status of users of this obsolete technology.

By the way a little detour. During the penultimate big wave of Russian pop music circa 1989, the ultimate bearer of music was the cassette. Albums were issued on them. Two cassette's boombox was the device of choice for listening music, and for copying. Music was spread among peers by this copying. Also bootlegged copies were commercially produced, music distribution was ninety percent a black market.

In the last big wave the delivery device for pop music was a PC. The auxiliary bearer was a CD disc. It is necessary to clarify, it wasn't a bought compact disc with an artist's album. It was a home burned CD, which was used in a car player or at a social gathering. At home to everyone's needs served a PC with its folder of music collection and media player.

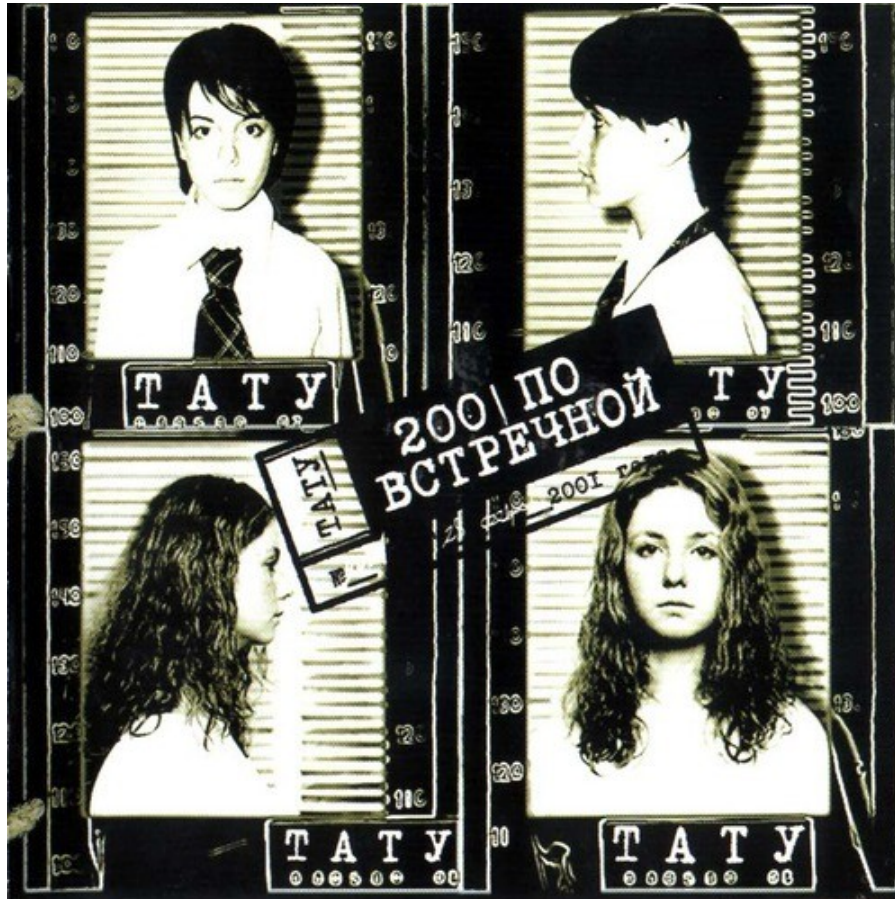
To conclude let be hovering a minute on how new music appears in a listener's folders. It is very important, since it was unique and existing only for the this period of time. The speed for the outer internet was low at these years and also the Napsterish file exchange services didn't really spread the roots on Russia's soil.

So you came to your friend home and copied what you like from his or her music collection. Or you connect through local network and do the same. The perks of that method is you received a valuable recommendation when you see a well organized collection. It completely lost since all began use torrent or other downloading services. You must know what you want before. Then you come to your peer you don't know what you will leave with.

This exchange bolstered the big wave, good stuff spread with the speed of light at a dorm network. Frankly speaking I often bought new album's CDs or old album's DVD mp3 collections cause I liked to have most up-to-date and multifarious music folder, it called test, may be because I was eager to test every music I have had my hands on. And I didn't bulk to share my knowledge. Peer to

peer in these days meant you really new your peers.

But as I mentioned *Sveta* did not diffused through college students' pcs well. The another side of this method of exchange is that you might be taste-shamed for some stuff in your folders. And *Sveta*'s tracks brought this kind of shame. What contribute to it, perhaps some antagonism between an educated and non-educated youth is really exists. She sang for them, and poaching is bad, but she's obviously good.



## Intermediary I. Echo of previous eras, the rave without an end. *Kirpichi*.

This Intermediary concludes a first part of this short companion. So let's take our time to sum up all tendencies that we discover in these chapters.

First, of all we dealt with an early period of the big wave. This phenomenon hadn't yet taken on all characteristic features. We will deal with its mature state in next part of companion. So first part was about early prominent group and a character of Russian pop.

It was a surge, all seems to appear at once and mostly in a perfect shape circa year 1998. Later it will mature and sophisticate. Now it was fresh and overwhelming. Maybe it is a clue that is impossible not to notice that the Big wave has arrived. In first part we embrace the conception of the big wave to make a chronology and clarify the changes in Russian pop music. The conception of the big wave includes the observation that for the Russian pop music a development goes through the tides and ebbs when still periods during which nothing happens followed by blossom periods of great groups and hits. The waves begin and end abruptly. Just yesterday's supergroup perceived today completely obsolete. And waves differ from each other completely as a geological era.

For example *Kirpichi* is the group that belongs to the penultimate wave of 1989 – 1994, but happens to exist during the last wave of 1998 – 2007. The atmosphere, texts, way of performing all places group in a previous era, but as a living fossil it issued albums in a next one. So its lacking congruity state was obvious to everyone, in spite of they wrote really good songs.

Second, we made an acquaintance with a three-tier structure of Russian pop music. It consists of an official scene that suckles on taxpayers' money and poisons an air with a hate and stupidity. Next goes an regular show business that tries to produce a new musical product for the sake of money and that sometimes brings a pretty decent results. And third the artists that is wildly popular among all Russians or some detached groups of people, but for some reasons never made it to the one of two previously mentioned tiers.

*Kirpichi* was too good, too advanced, not corrupted, honest, and having lyrics full of meaning, there was no way that they would be accepted by government musical officials. For the show business producers they stayed out too far from the average mainstream entertainment pop. Russian show business's not sophisticated to dig up hard money, it can sell only for big audiences and only standardized product. But *Kirpichi* were well known and even more they had a huge dedicated fan base. So the group was in Russian pop music but was not on a pop scene or on radiowaves. And that occurs very often.

Third, Russian has a great culture. This is not an entrenched isolated national culture, it is a culture of humanity itself. So they have an ability to create the new worlds. Russian pop music produces an original stuff. Had the twentieth century been more benevolent to Russia, it would be a world music mainstream, as it now American, Brit, or Euro pop are. The big wave's Russian artist create something completely new every time. In previous chapters we've already met the boys' band with trip hop hit, a young girls liberation duo, and a classical music as a pop fodder. Not to mention the dance music genius who outshines European hands down.

Well, *Kirpichi* was something completely different from all your listening experience. That was rave in an epoch of rap. It could be depicted as slow lazy rap, but there was angry rave outbursts as well. Self indulgence, indolence of raving youth, and a rap men's contempt to the society. To say the least that was really unusual and shaking mix, and in the same time it was very good music.

Fourth, we discussed that the big wave coincide with three major go-betweens which showed up at this time. They shaped the wave and provide its diffusion to the greater audience. It was the students, night clubs, and pcs.

And fifth, to conclude this intermediary, I remember you that we first touched the problem of freedom, how it seems to be the necessary condition of tides and the lack of thereof brings ebbs. May be we will can face this question more thoroughly in a third part. In a second part we will consider a high period of this Big Wave, meet a mature groups of this period, and take a closer look at atmosphere, song`s lyric and music, the video, all the content, message, references, and self identification that are defininng this wave`s russian music.



*Propaganda*



*Otpetye Moshenniki*



*Ruki Vverh*



*Ivanushki International*

**The End of Part I.**



## The voice of a new generation. *Zveri*.

Russians live in a very ugly towns. There are no individual one-family houses, only ten to sixteen store buildings. In one of them might be hundreds of families. Flats are tiny one or two bedrooms one toilet and kitchen. Two or three generations exist under one “roof”, they share three rooms for examples between two familys, so grown and even married children not only live with parents but grandchildren often was born in grandparents appartments. Appartments of very modest seven hundred square foot, on the eights floor for example.

How russian “suburban” area looks like. It is rectangulars formed by four ten to sixteen store buildings with a communal yard in the middle. Rectangulars that was put up side by side with some plan and in a same time may be marked as “neighborhoods”. If you lucky enough you live in one of these “neighborhood”, but since the soviet union fell apart in rossiiskaya federation new buildings are built without any plan so the towns are begining to looks like cement favelas. So the biggest territory in the world and no place for living for russians.

It may seems so depressed but when you are young your future are felt more auspicious. The group *Zveri* protray these fellings, they represent new generation, they were a new generation and sang for them. And they staged their song in this urban rectangulars of “sleeping” neighborhoods so unhuman and so native to everybody.

First of all they had radically brought together the imaginative world of art and the earthy world of town`s districts. And this mixed world became pregnant and lopsided toward new world. It rendered the concrete buildings fragile as wind mills.

Second their song`s protagonist was the urban twenty something person. He longed for better living, he fights not struggles and it make the mundane streets brighter.

Together it is should be understood not as an escapism of some sort or denial, but the living ahead, a real possibility of breaking through the reality, the blowing of world.

It brings a phisically percieved tension to songs. World became resilient to touch, it doesn`t crumbles, you can climb it and run through the jungle. Old town becomes new forest with its new folk. A new insatiable, joyful, happy, deriding crowd. A new generation, an urban youth.

To meet them see and listen the two thousand fourth`s concert of *Zveri in Olimpiysky*. It`s indispensable listening. The best concert of the time.

“*Someone like me, live only an hour, remember me as I am now*” that is the line from one song. He was burning. All generation was yearning, it was an honest generation, we were smart, we were good, we lived truthful, and hated false and unfairness. The best generation so far.

And all had been over. And there will be nothing here.

So the current situation is a hibernation. The *Zveri`s* albums is percieved as of completely different epoch. It isn`t even our past, since it`s unfathomable how we can reach this misery from there. The world is decaying. The generation is catched in four walls of their rented appartments in untidy buildings of ugly russian towns.

That was the bottom. Now is long winter. Nothing even happens. Step from porch, you will lost in woods and die. So stay calm, see in window, every movement or action is mistake, and wait for spring. And in Russia it wouldn't be an easy lazy spring break, it would be sacre du printemps, the rite of spring. Or may be not. How can you predict the geniuses. You can predict only the next big tide.



## The beauty. *Zemfira*.

*Zemfira* is the most beautiful music ever created during this period of Russian pop. Others may arise you, entertain you, she enthralled you. She purify your mind, until the only thing that stays is a still spirit, warm and translucent. “*What a stillness, I am alone, Rain goes on, the bubbles on a pavement, I’m adding them, and I don’t know you any more always*”. It is lyric from the song *Krasota* (Beauty), that’s the all lyric in this song, but like an impressionist’s painting with minimal means it creates the perfect picture.

That’s the highest aesthetic of the time. The feelings of ethereal creature, if the geist have had a soul. So it reflects not the veriest people which live this time but rather men and women living in an platonic world of ideal forms counterparts of themselves. The nearest approximation is a protagonist she-hero of her songs, e.g. “*Girl, living in the net*” from the track *Web-girl*.

I’m reading what I’ve wrote and it might create a wrong impression that she was completely detached from real life. But the thing is that that she was a real life for a long time. We felt the things in her way of feeling them. “*Little Ann asked to take off the tanks*” (*Maechki*). That’s the feeling of an infinite beauty “*Drinking macho is making love and crying that because he knows how so perfectly good when this befalls us*” (*Macho*).

Her songs were not optimistic, rare bright, not sensual, it’s really hard to catch the mood, there can be a compare with casting of a spell, but they were clearer than a dew drop. Listen full albums from the first 1998 *Zemfira* to the last 2005 *Vendetta*. The last one is perfect you may push a repeat button and fall in love with every track one after another.

She compose not a dance music. But it fit very well in a huge stadium concert atmosphere, when light goes off and attendees lit up a thousands of little personal device’s diods, it makes a celestial firmament on earth with miriads of blinking stars. It’s not a punk madness, it is a rapture, that brings an experience of revelation to the concert crowd. Imagine all this while listening a track *Ne otpuskai menya*. “*Eternal and youthful / just behind the dune / awaiting you sailboat / one that I dreamed of*”.

The current situation in country, what can be said. She barely noticed it in the begining. What is the little turmoils for the eternity, she was speaking with. But the end zoom in very quickly in the last years. It was decided without us that here will be no future. No future means the end of an infinity. So it has brought about almost physically percieved retching feelings. She did must issue the two albums after *Vendetta*, and she did it in late 2007 and 2009. You may see by their content that they were made by a genius, but they are empty, they are practically posthumonous. Time has stoped, but we still alive. Very few artists can get across this idea.

But let return to the core years. The main audience of her songs was well educated youth of big cities. It is a common mistake to attribute the cinicism to the higher level of society. Remaining at the same time for the bottom levels the purity of a simple life. It is right in a completely opposite mode. Higher education aquired, more property possessed, higher level of a culture absorbed the better a man or a woman will be. She raised the bar, elevated the level of discussion between her and the audience. It wasn’t only an entertainment, she gave a new emotions, which her listeners may feel the first time in their lifes, they could adopt them, made them their own, some kind of emotional intelligence was rised in the youth. These were subtle emotions a slight movements of souls toward beauty.

It might be going another way, if the second capital was the real one. *Multfilmy*.

If it doesn't happen in Moscow, it hardly exist in a country at all. If something occurs in other places, nobody cares. It is a common true, with one exception – Peterburg. For two centuries it was the capital. When most of the people who lived there were killed or ousted. But the place hadn't disappeared, and the spirit of this town isn't something that can be easily erased. So comes new people, and their children, and they continue do it in their own way.

Local musical scene is significantly different from country's one. And it is huge with great number of groups, it has the connections between artist, that makes it not just concoction or hodgepodge but the mixture with an internal structure. Mostly it is hermetically closed, but sometimes the bright protuberances breach out from the boiling core and light up the musical firmament.

I have seen the group leader while I was carousing at the underground artistic cafe. He sit with the members of the crew and was drinking drinks and smocking cigarettes. The underground cafes, I think it must had been *Pirogi*, were the big part of a new landscape of places where the youth and not so young but artistic people starts to hang out. It was dim, cheap, and overcrowded so cafes had everything that was needed for the cultural folk, there people gathered to talk and smoke, to drink and think, to eat and meet, it was motley warm crowd of an intelligencia.

The group members were young, attractive, played guitars, and had charismatic leader. Is it a classic rock band for the youngsters, not so fast. First of all they haven't youth's angst, they were self-assured. Second, they didn't suffer a depression, they were bright, joyful, they like yourself and others, just slightly mocking sometimes not so enlightened people. Next, they didn't have agenda, they were just one or two head higher than ordinary people, so you may grow to their level, or who cares. So they were really outliers.

Just as any peterburg's group would, that have popped-up on the surface. If you want to see other russia you shouldn't go any farther, listen groups of a peterburg's musical ancestry. And we must confess that by our opinion it is a better version of reality.

In this reality people live in beautiful european town, sex is not a big deal even in most advanced forms, people are positive-thinking and kind, and only with accordance to young age are slightly mischievous. They are good people, they outlive adventures not disastrous. They have their future, their country, their present. They can dream awake.

It is not only music that has this peterburg's hue. Movies that were shoot there is also outstanding. If you'd like to see movie where you'd want to live, don't go any farther again. You may see it in films like *Progulka* or even more in *Piter FM*. So this is a phenomenon that spans throughout all culture. We are not doomed, we just had chose the wrong path. If only the second capital remained a real one.

Returning to the group *Multfilmy* let's form an indispensable listening list, it will include four albums, 2000's *Stereosignal* and *Multfilmy*, and 2002's *Vitaminy* and *Superpriz*. These are of a great music material so they may be listened in their entirety.

We may finish here, but I notice that I've wrote nothing about the group *Multfilmy* at all. The leader was the face and the brain of a band. A slender, slim, lanky boy. He was handsome in a way smart young boys are. Independent and good. He doesn't give a shit about your old crap, he had his own peers. They are living on their own. Not against or in support of you. It just seems that we after all had the smart self-possessed youth at this time.

That generation was born circa 1978 plus or minus two years. At the start of new millenium they were 20 – 24 years old.

And *Multifilmy*'s songs is the beautiful portray that there is a better, clear as wee hours` morning, early summer world.



The alternative, or a wrong path of the russian rock. *Korol i shut*.

Today we are turning our eyes to the great failure of the Russian rock during this Big wave. The Russian rock was a main theme, some kind of an undercurrent mainstream of a previous Big wave, one that occurred in the late eighties early nineties. But in the new circumstances there was no place for rock, the pop unequivocally became the main genre this time. What if we try to make a rock a little more popish, well we will have got a bullshit. So how it happened.

This try has his name it is *Nashe Radio* and its creator *Misha Kozyrev*. It will be fair to say from the beginning that this radio was the best. Another stations were a meaningless hodgepodge, and may be turned into a cd-changer without any loss that anyone can notice. But *Nashe Radio* had an idea and created a second incarnation of russian rock. It had a formative influence that can be compared to the *MTV*. So what *Misha* did. He sorted out a groups that was young, had guitars, and was playing a light rock music, without any social tension, depression, self-destruction, and proselytism of hell or heaven of the previous, we may call it a great Russian rock.

Let`s entertain people like pop does but with the musical material of greater quality, with a tinge of a more intellectual and sophisticated lyrics, having human faces and urban clothes instead of scenic underwear of pop dolls, and other embellishments of this sorts that pamper to the young well-educated middle class, longing for their socially accepted and stylish way to revel. The frames were established, the hard rotations paved the path, the station became hugely popular, and the influx of new groups ensued. It was the real success, even more substantial it begot a new genre, a very rare thing in a culture. But something went wrong.

Let`s take a step aside and meet our today host a group *Korol i Shut*. The frontmen has canines growing second row above other teeth, and the same time lacks incisor. The image of group is unkempt ragtag anarchists. Themes of lyric are cannibalism, alcoholism, friendship, brotherhood, joyful suicide, black magic, satan, and musketeers. And it was most popular group that *Nashe Radio* brings into existence.

What the hell is wrong with you people, you ask. Isn`t it supposed to be some easy listening britrock radio for twenty-something stylish urbanites. How could you so fast come from “harukami” to the lead singer named *Gorshok* (potty). Well, that is the magic power of art.

There is two thoughts I have about it. First is there some kind of a soft rock. Of cause the answer is yes, for example the group singing out loud a teenage angst. Let`s make a one step farther, is there a light positive soft rock, well it may be construct somehow “*blink your eyelashes and fly up*”. But innocently carousing young adult student rejoicing over flowers, it is too much. The russian word *glum* means the opposite of its english counterpart, it is cruel mocking and deriding. And that was done by *Korol i Shut*, they`ve come, trampled the flowers, and made the debauchery, by the way full of joy and happiness.

Second problem is truthfulness. The Great russian rock was extremely truthful and all the way serious. The backdrop of a New russian rock turned to be illusory. From the other side when new group tried to use an old card and began to play seriousness or even self-destruction it was a pretense and therefore the false. So they try to continue to put up an edifice but simultaneously toppled two supporting pillars.

What can grew out from these juxtaposition and contradiction. Only the likes of *Korol i Shut*. The full stop and a dead end for the russian rock, but a really good group itself. Inebriated reverie and carousing with magic, hell, and anarchy no sinister than dark beer. This our light and soft and they rock it.



## The real underground, or the rise of the rap. *63 region*.

A collateral scion of this big wave happened to be the Russian rap. It is a secondary phenomenon, which never made it to the big stage. But as the undercurrent it must be crowned as the biggest, according to the wide spread, especially among uneducated youngsters.

Russian rap experienced fastest rise and fall in a history of russian music. First of all there was not long hidden roots of rap in russian soil, there was actually one try in early nineties to dovetail *East17*-ish style with sexually explicit lyric, but it was long long ago. So it appeared from nothere, it never changed, it lasted only five years 2000 – 2005, and after that all was over.

In previous chapters I said that if something doesn't occur in the capital, it doesn't exist at all in russian pop music, with minor exception for the second capital. But it seems that Russian rap doesn't consist with this rule either. It was music of big provincial towns, in russian federation these towns may have million of denizens, but no clout in any areas. So depression and lamentations of russian rap suited them very well.

There was no lead artist on rap scene in any given period of time. There was a loose net of festival events, and some kind of a rap crowd, where people know each other. But there was not specialized clubs, there wasn't even a special radio station to air their songs, they were very rare guests on radiowaves. So there was no infrastructure. Nevertheless it spreaded like wild crown fire form peer to peer, especially as I said among youngsters, seems their curcuit has not resistance to the rap at all.

The typical russian rap group projected really discouraging staff, that reflects the life of white nigga of depressed urban outskirts. But reality at this moment was completely opposite, crime rates had dropped significantly since nineties, and the economy was on the rise, and russia was becoming more europe-like country in early 00's. So it corresponded only to adolescent feelings of global disparity and nothing else.

Sad and angry rap seemed unnatural. Joyful and self-assertive was more appropriate. The main themes were sex, booze, and success. Lyrics were not sophisticated, music wasn't exquisite either. They overcame by young energy and unabashedness.

*63<sup>rd</sup> region* is not your typical russian rap crew. Of cause it had shared a common fate, but they were very talented, not only bold and young and slightly gifted in rhyming. So common fate, they were from big town, but it was provincial and had nothing to offer for good artists. They made two outstanding albums without any help, and never get any help later, they were not aired by stations, they were not booked for the touring. Everyone could recognize something familiar when accidentally hear their songs, but had no clue what the group it was. That's the common fate of russian pop artist, who may be quite popular, but can't make a fortune out of it. The lack of institutional structure, in russian federation whatever you need, you may be sure it doesn't exist or isn't properly functioning.

Not typical was that they were not depressed at all and their songs were musically mature. You may listen 2003's album *Bez Pravil* tracks 7, 11, 13, 17 and 2005's album *Riskovat* tracks 7, 9, 10. They had signed all what they want, and then proceed their lives in other directions, may be for the better. Russian rap didn't get traction on russian soil, it still remains in adolescent ghetto, which he will never escape. Not a big deal, russian rap had been, and was not worse than other local raps of other nations. It a good niche at best. It is not the main path for russian pop music, it happens, seems rap after all belongs only to the place of origin.



## The tales of a dark forest. *Tem Grinhill*.

It is always interesting how people, situated in a same time and places, manage to live in a completely different worlds. For example, every normal man or woman had a happy childhood, no matter what happens in their countries at the same time, except for extreme calamities, but it is a very rare cases. Opposite it is hard to find a fully content adult, they are dogged by depressions, anxieties, and unstable situations on the markets. Not only childrens and adults live in a different worlds, it may be seen with a best clarity among adolescent human beings. How many niche cultures came into existence through the imagination of fast grown kids.

They go to the forest, they consider themselves as elves and dwarfs, orcs and heroes, wizards, merchants, mercenary swords, and losted souls. From a side it is viewed as ragtag hodgepodge of handmade armory, outlandish costumes, and strange people. But it is superstitions, stereotypes, and prejudice of a normal, in his own eyes, sideviewer. They've got true friendship, they discern good and evil, they fall in love and carousing, they just play more interesting games than football, or to say more watching a football. You can find out this yourself, there is an excellent memoir of russian reenactor *Djonny – Skazki Temnogo Lesa*.

But we are interesting here what they had brought to a musical table. And it seems their contributions were enormously huge. The leading branch or reenactors at those times was *tolkienists*, who rearrange the world of middle earth at their gatherings, and minds. The big part of it was a creation of a corpus of musical compositions – ballads, dances, etc. that may was played in this world. The theme occured to be profoundly fecund.

As a result the big chunk of a singer-songwriter genre was represented by artist whose inspiration laid in a fantasy world. It was not only a biggest part of a genre, it was the best one. So if you'd like to hear a tender female vocal with a company of murmuring guitar or fiddle, good chance you will hear about *Luthien*, *Gondolin*, star-crossed love, high-born heroes, malevolent wizards, and of cause about the sylvan king *Thranduil*.

To dive into this world listen following tracks, *Nespetaya Ballada Lyutika*, *Zaschitnikam Shaervedda*, *Oruzhenosec*, *Otpustite menya v moi son*, *Davai uidem na zare*, *Ne ischchi moih sledov* by *Tem Grinhill*, or *Gondolin*, *Korol lesov Thranduil* by *Illet*.

The live music is going from this world. I don't care about concertish events, when the sound system's giving out thousands watts it really doesn't matter that artist's singing and playing him or herself, it is good though, but it not the kind of a live music I'm talking about. The music is coming to life when it plays face to face. Before now every company had a guy or girl who can play guitar, and it was a special treat to hear them singing at the occasional gatherings, celebrations, or just parties. Now even if you're sitting around fire in the woods there may be nobody, who brought guitar. Before now lad might score an additional points approaching his lass with guitar, now what he can do, only share earbuds of smartphone, it's lame, it's so lame.

During the previous big wave, guitar players were widely spread among youth, and their repertoire consisted mostly of the russian rock. At the next big wave, the one we have under consideration here, the amount of guitar owners dropped significantly. Their repertoire changed as well.

As familiar it was to see a singing out loud company before, as bizzare it is now. Reenactors' camp is the last sanctuary for the live singing to your own peers, although they'd prefer to call it the last fortress. Magic's leaving this world.



## The pure genius. *Anna Plotnikova*.

The genius can be born everywhere, it's a matter of probability. So most geniuses would originate from a humble backgrounds. Even from a rural area as our today's protagonist. They had families that could not understand what's going on with a youngster.

If you are talented, you may endure life's circumstances for a very long time, dodging like a rat from mop and running from corner to corner. But if you are a genius, you would just fly away through a transom. That comparison of talent and genius isn't mine, it belongs to one genius. Our protagonist escaped so many deadends, rural nowhere, community college, even got a higher education, and became at a time a professional entertainer, some sort of though, as it is entertainer at spa resort, this resort also is some sort of, because it situated at a place with harsh climate without any tourist attractions. It illustrates that in russian federation everything is upside down, and to wave your way to any decent destination in life you must be a genius. Of course it doesn't concern a common crowd, ordinaries which coast their ways unconsciously in any circumstances.

So what is an oeuvre of a protagonist. It is a singer-songwriter's stuff. Guitar, synthesizer, female vocal, and charming songs full of enthralled lyric about life, struggles, happiness and everything in between. Good sound performance. Where does the magic go from?

The thing is this ethereal feeling that true love exist. It is not a commitment or an obligation. That's the pure desire, obsession you can indulge in, reciprocational or unrequited. There is something inside that proof its existence when being exposed in *Anna's* songs. That is moving revelation that it is, you can love the world, because in this world there is at least possibility of something great.

Even more *Anna's* songs give you a slight experience of this strong feelings, not resentment, pure yearning, you can live vicariously through magic of her lyric. And more you can put on her perception of reality, and then, when you go on a quiet august night to any prosaic destination, you can slip under the dull veil of a world and emerge on the other side at a primordial soup of primeval emotions towards the nature, yourself, and the vague object of a desire, not the possession, but knowledge. It really is, and there is beauty around, cause there is the reason, and it is benevolent.

Russians is not religious people, there is no god in their childhood, and for adults it is hard to embrace a religion, if it occurs it is a sign of a serious problems that person have. Humanism couldn't become a secular religion, because russians are more misanthropic than philanthropic folks, and they are not so great in dealing with it other, frankly speaking they are bad at this. But russians are very sentimental, at least they were before revolution. And this often even now brokes through the soviet cultural tiers of dishonesty and post-soviet filth of russian federation.

So where is the source of an *Anna Plotnikova's* ingenuity to brought her people back the deep feelings of higher level. Does it stem from her life experience. Actually doesn't seem so, since her life, with caveats of cause, is an ordinary russian hodgepodge of loosely planing turns. May be it stems from background roots of russian culture. And she was a major in culture but it was really local university and evening courses. I'm just kidding, cause I don't know.

Geniuses just appears, randomly, but it seems it occurs more oftenly in some places, among some nations, or at a particular time. And this is the case of russia, russians, and the period of the big wave we have under consideration.

## Intermediary II. The strange case of Pasha K. *Pavel Kashin*.

This Intermediary conclude a second part of this book. In these chapters we were dealing with a high stage of the Big wave, the first part described the dawn, now it's a high noon of russian pop music, best groups, big festivals, legendary concerts, indispensable albums. In the first part we more considered the general rules of russian pop, now we dove in content, songs' lyrics, artists' image, backdrop, and the emerging world as a whole, that art of this wave created.

In the first Intermediary we meet the group *Kirpichi* that stuck in a previous era, now let's meet an artist who doesn't belong to neither of them. *Pasha Kashin* his art not only haven't time dimension it also denies any classification attempt. He even wasn't heard on radio since no one station could figure out how to include his songs in their playlists.

Returning to the main point what was the world that had been created or reproduced by the artists.

First of all this world was radically urban. It is a world of big cities, capitals. The defining break through moment for the group *Zveri* for example was when they embraced the aesthetic of massive, consisted of ten-twelve store buildings blocks at the outskirts of towns, where the modern russians live. The cultural center belonged to the groups like *Multfilmy*. *Zemphira* covered the town as an idea, in platonic sense of a word. Even second incarnation of russian rock had a good chances to occupy campuses, which in russia's case are scattered in a dense town's quarters as well.

So music arrived to the place of living of its listeners. Art brings magic, and for the period of time it seems that where people can live, and even be rooting for the future.

As of time the place doesn't really matter for *Pavel Kashin*, he live a meter above the mundane earth. So his magic may exist, but the magic of above mentioned artists with their close ties to the cities may exist only while a tiny portion of it remains in an urban landscape. Since russian towns had been devoid of this possibility of happiness, the music was doomed.

Second major feature was an intellectualism that soared at this period. Peoples were becoming smarter every year and so were the music. The previous wave's tunes was primitive, ridiculously cheap. Now people started to appreciate more elaborate melodies, more sophisticated music cadence, meaningful lyric. Simple pop remains but it was not him, who delineate a portrait of current music vibes. *Zemphira* had very exquisite tracks, and were at the top of billboards. Even boys' bands honed their style to artistic acuteness. Rockers and punks weren't swearing or cursing, imagine this one.

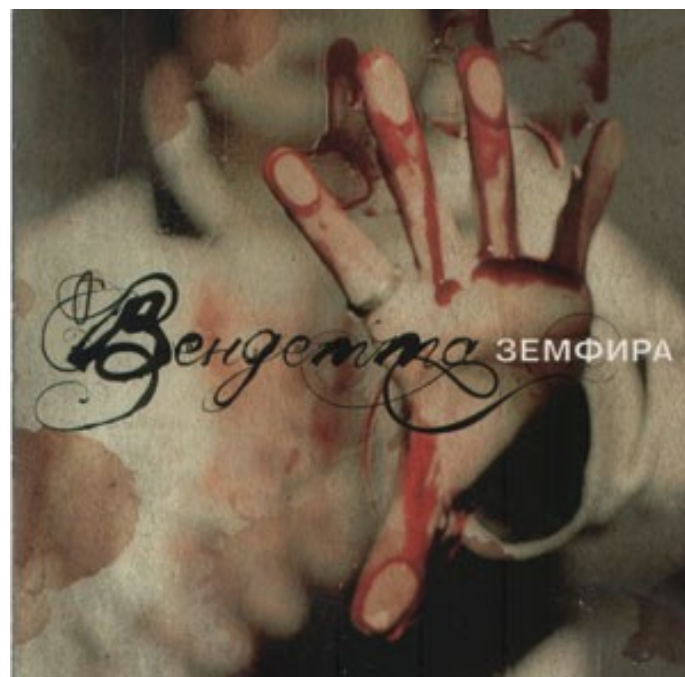
*Pavel Kashin* was so well-mannered that he completely cut himself off the public life. Pure art. I am making song, you are free to buy albums and savor it. But should I really burden your experience with appearances as a talking head at shows or magazines, may be sometimes a small concert, if you interested. Extremely refined position, and he had huge fan base consonantly well-polished.

As a third characteristic can be named an optimistic beauty. It was kinda mood of the period. Some may find beauty in destruction, that was the point of a previous wave by the way, or construction. This time it was rather a beauty of being, just existence in an acceptable circumstances of a desert life, a rare period, especially in russia. Time when pursuit of happiness seems a real opportunity.

The freedom is an important issue for the many artists. There is only very few of them who can push aside everything and write a music in an ivory tower. And *Pasha Kashin* was one of them.

So to conclude this intermediary about main traits of content of russian pop music through this period let's repeat them in a reverse order. Third is a positive contented self-assertive mood of a man or a woman, today is good, the noon is bright. Second is the quality of music tissue that had risen tremendously, excellent music for the good people. By the way it was completely original content and in a some cases never seen before. First is a backdrop which become recognizable for young urban listeners, their everyday landscape which was reimagined and enriched through an emotionally charged magic of russian music.

Power of thought and beauty pierced the reality and engulfed a life enchanting it into a better place.





*Pavel Kashin*

**The End of Part II.**