

## TIMEZONES UKRAINE **TRANSCRIPT**

# Music or Weapon: Four Monologues from Ukraine

A podcast by Dmytro Fedorenko

## 1. Burning Woman

[0:40] My name is Kateryna Kostrova aka Burning Woman. I am a musician from Kyiv, Ukraine. Originally from Donetsk.

[0:53] I have some difficulties composing new music since the war started. And I hear that a lot from my fellow musicians, from my friends. And I'm really trying to get back to this [part] of my musical practice, but I take these baby steps, so it's very slow, but I'm kinda getting back to it.

[1:22] You know, I see what weapons that foreign countries give us... I see how they benefit us, how they are changing the situation, and I think music can't do that, actually. Music can't win the war, unfortunately.

[1:42] But still, I think it's very important for all the Ukrainian and not-Ukrainian artists to, you know, speak about it, about what's going on, because the awareness that people have from outside Ukraine... it's really important that they can bring awareness of what is going on, because in my experience, I've noticed that the perception of war is really different [depending on] how far you are physically from it. And so it's very... it's still very important to tell people about what's happening... tell them the truth about it, that they don't forget it... then, you know, just some news, just get out from the informational field and...

[2:35] So, it's important to talk about it.

[2:41] I think, actually, what... everything that we do, like, everything that Ukrainians do, no matter what, it's actually bringing us closer to win. And if someone is ready to speak up, it's even better. But I don't think that people should be pushed to it.

[3:04] I've seen it, like, in 2014 and 2015, like when the war just started, many artists felt obligated to express some political opinions of their own... even... when they are not even so, like, famous and publicly known... but if you, like, if you keep silent, people start, you know, questioning... what side you're on and something like that.

[3:36] So, yeah, I think it's important for an artist to speak up, but I really don't like when it's pushed, when it's something under pressure, you know.

[3:48] And I think the more famous the artist is, obviously the more impact, influence on [the] audience he or she has. So, yeah, it can play a big role of making people aware.

[4:10] Basically, my life hasn't changed that much at first glance after [the] war started. But if you dig a little deeper, yes, everything has changed, including my feeling of being free, you know, of being secure, safe. And it's all in the air here, actually. Even though Kyiv now seems like a normal place to live, you know. Sometimes it seems like nothing is going on, except for the air raid sirens, but you can feel this tension in the air.

[4:44] And me, personally... I've noticed that I've lost this ability to picture my future, picture myself in a future, to dream about the future. And it's really frustrating sometimes. It's really frustrating because sometimes life just loses meaning, sense.

[5:07] I can't say that I'm 100% free right now. I feel like I'm under pressure. But I really hope that this will end soon and... things will get better.

[5:30] Well, yeah, I've changed... I think that I've changed a lot and I think I'm just getting through this transformation still.

[5:41] Ah, at first, you know, in February and March, we all had this burst of adrenaline. We all, like, wanted to kick their asses, and yeah, we were so charged with all this... anger... And it's really, like, calmed down all the other forms of frustration..., insecurity, for some time... But then it all came back and I had like a full-fledged episode of depression. And I think a lot of people will have some... will feel some psychological impact of this war.

[6:32] So it's a hard and difficult time, psychologically. But I still hope for the best, sure!

[6:39] I think it's very important that we don't lose hope, because once we lose it, the Russians are going to win.

[6:52] Now... now I can't say that I'm afraid, because, you know, first of all it's crazy to what people can adapt, actually. And, you know, no one even goes to the shelter now and...

[7:07] Yeah, I'm not afraid, I'm pretty sure that we will... win. And sure, it will be not an easy task, but I think we're all just gonna live through it, and be patient, and be supportive of each other. And this is what will help us to overcome difficulties here.

[7:37] I just wanna thank everyone who is supporting Ukraine, actually, because it really matters a lot, and I think that we couldn't do that without all that support... from the rest of the world. And this is really important, that people are doing all this any way they can.

## 2. Ujif\_notfound

[8:15] My real name is Gosha, Georgiy Potopalskyi. I'm an artist living in Ukraine since 2006. My artist name is Ujif\_notfound.

[8:32] These five months... it's getting worse and worse, as for me.

[8:41] These five months, we have a war... real war, real massacre... when I see blood and dead bodies every day in the news, and my friends go to the war, and some days I got news about deaths of my friends...

[9:10] I am trying to do the best I can... to support, of course, my friends in the war, and I'm trying to make art, but it's a really hard time for the art, as for me. Personally for me. But I still can't stop doing some things, like... to make music, or to make visual [art], or to learn something new.

[9:52] In the beginning of the war, of course, the idea to make music disappeared completely, immediately. But weeks after, when the danger goes out, you start to realize that, actually, you can live in this situation, with sirens, with every time watching all these news... And I try to make some music...

[10:23] And the problem was with my studio, because the studio was in a government building and inside it was a lot of soldiers... And I can't enter this place and I can't even say where it was... like this... because it's secret and so on.

[10:46] And so I just, one day I got all my stuff from the studio at my home... And my building was absolutely empty because all neighbors are gone... I was almost alone in the building, so I started to play some music.

[11:15] And it helps... When you start to play music and you... for this time, when you are playing, when you're trying to build something in the sound... you forget about everything that goes on around. And actually I think it's good idea to make some music... this time.

[11:43] Music can be weapon. I know some examples when the music is the weapon and actually the music is just part of... of the media. So the whole media could be a very strong weapon... as for me. And of course it's the weapon.

[12:07] For me, it's – every time was this balance between... to be the abstract artist of the sense, of the sense of something that goes outside the border of... of understanding... the world. And on the other side, to be in the social life with all this injustice from... yeah... to work with this injustice in the world... About crossing the borders of personal freedom... and so on.

[12:54] I'm free inside and I'm absolutely not a free, like, social person.

[13:02] I mean, I'm changing every time, but the war actually doesn't change anything. Maybe I start to be more... more radical.

[13:14] I ask myself, is it ok if I will do some things which shows... exactly what is going on around me. It means that, every time, it was some kind of an abstract vision and sound about everything which [is] going on in the world, but now I... I realized that I start [to] do very straight things... using very straight points... pointing on some... something what is going on now... what is going on now.

[13:58] It's hard to think about the future, because it... it's all about myself and my situation and what will [be] going on tomorrow with me and my family. And globally, what is going on in like ten years forward with the whole world.

[14:19] Sometimes I switch, and yes, maybe I think... well, it's hard for me to think forward. Actually, I can say that now I'm living, like, today. I'm thinking about what is going on now, what I will do today.

[14:40] I'm afraid...[of] occupation. I'm not afraid of something like rockets that can blow [up] my house with me in it. But I don't want to see these Russian terrorists around in this country.

[15:04] The big fear for me [is] that I don't feel the border against this... nation... anymore. I need to feel it like, you know, like concrete border which they can't cross... at all. And I'm afraid of this assimilation with... if I can call it «Russian national». So, I'm afraid of assimilation with this part of the world.

[15:36] I'm afraid that we could lose a lot of good people inside our country, inside Ukrainian people. I mean lose them not only physically, but also and... lose their feeling of being free, real free Ukrainians.

[15:59] I feel now that some people just, you know, lost themselves. I feel like part of the nation just disappeared... So, my statement... Come back.

### **3. Symonenko**

[16:59] I'm Vitaliy Symonenko, a musician from Kyiv. Originally born and raised in Luhansk... which is now occupied by Russians.

[17:14] In this February, Russians... well, started full-scale war against us. So, and [the] first two days I was shocked and didn't know what to do and so on, like it happened to many of

us. But then I started releasing music and two... maybe the first month of war was extremely productive for me. So I released about ten tracks... And now, this period for me is – sounds like silence maybe.

[17:48] I still feel in this situation when I have to be... to beware of everything, you know, like, it's the constant warning state, like constant warning mode.

[18:00] So, this is my main thing now, to work [as someone who] plays for dances. Play for people who are really fed up with being scared and who really want to let go. So, this is the scene I'm working with now.

[18:20] Music is weapon. In my case, it is so.

[18:25] No, I don't have to choose, because for me, it's obvious, if I'm called to join those forces and so on, of course I... I will be happy to.

[18:35] I still never killed human and so on, but now I think everybody in Ukraine is ready to kill... and it would be really glorious happy moment to... to make your contribution into this... huge process, as to help Ukraine win. So I think it won't be a problem at all.

[19:06] There are two types of artists. One [type] of artists are cowards, as obvious they keep silence, even though they have so much communications with us, they are connected with us and been playing here for many years. Every weekend and so on. And now they are keeping silence. So this is the coward way of the artist. And I think these people shouldn't be counted on in... in future.

[19:41] And... one more way is... to be brave. At least to tell the things which they are, I guess. So for us, it is needed that artists have to speak, so we should use our power. Because it is, like, typical example of soft power. So we should use it.

[20:01] And bravery is not only taking weapons in case when you need it. It is also speaking, speaking loud. And doing it each time it is needed. And now it is needed like... 24/7, you know.

[20:17] So this is the way now. Like fifty percent of energy should be spent on creating music... fifty percent should be spent on telling the world of Ukraine.

[20:33] In some understanding I'm absolutely free, because I have a passport of the best country in the world. I also choose for doing things only... those things I really like. I don't do things I hate or I suffer from. So I think it deals with happiness... So I can say I'm a happy person now.

[20:57] I don't know how much time I'm still left here to work in my studio and so on. This is why I'm trying to spend each free moment, like, to work on my... my modular and my understanding and so on.

[21:17] First of all, I understood it... I don't have much... and I can work with it. Even a laptop and controller is enough. So the war gave me the understanding that I don't need much at all. So, one pair of shoes, one pair of jeans, one hoodie, one computer – that's enough... A pair of headphones, so...

[21:38] Yeah, when we escaped to Lviv from Kyiv... at the second day of war, I guess, or the third day. So I had a choice what to take with me and I chose less clothes but more gear. So I took my friend's gear, who left it to me before he... he left Ukraine, as he was afraid of looters, he said maybe if war starts they will come to my place and steal my synthesizers... take it. So it took his synthesizers.

[22:19] I'm thinking of our bright future, of course. Because if being sad and pessimistic about it, it won't give you possibility to live... a good present. So my future, it's the same, which shapes my present, actually.

[22:40] We can die here at any moment, actually, due to all these rockets... This has become kind of a... some gambling, you know. So, no fear anymore.

[22:54] There are really many thoughts in my head, now and each day. So maybe the main message is to... value little, but in a good way organized things. So you should choose one weapon, there should be at least one weapon of choice, but it should be known perfectly.

## 4. Igor Yalivec

[23:50] My name is Igor Yalivec, I'm from Dnipro, Ukraine. It's real war here in Ukraine. Everyone here trying to defend our country in the ways that we can.

[24:09] As musician I try to collect money for... for our army.

[24:19] If you say about psychological factor, it's very hard to... create something, some art now. Because all my thoughts were about our lives, about my friends, about people who are bombed in the cities in Ukraine. But then I understood that I can make something from... by myself to help my friends, how to help people in Ukraine to fight in this war. Because I think that art now can help us.

[25:05] I don't think I can take a gun and kill people. I haven't any experience with guns, with army. So it's hard to me, but I think that with my art, I can support my country much more.

[25:27] So yes, I'm an artist... Maybe, if I can say that, something like military artist with military arts... Something like this... I think everyone here in Ukraine now who supports our country with art is a military artist.

[25:48] Everyone should understand what he can do best... take a weapon or make an art. So I think that weapon and art and music, in my case, are two hands of my... soul now.

[26:09] So, music and weapon.

[26:13] Because I don't think it's something that one is refuse another. So we can do music and we can take guns and weapons... and go to war.

[26:33] For me today, art can be that thing that can put an eye of any person on various problems. So I think art is a huge weapon in the world now... In the right mouth, in the right hands, in the right mind, art can be a huge weapon.

[27:04] Freedom is a very big... I felt freedom till the 24<sup>th</sup> of February. I can't feel free today because of Russia.

[27:24] You know, I... for these few months... the only changes that I feel is... now I can't think about philosophy a lot. Maybe this is a main change in my mind now, because I can't think about something abstract, about something philosophical.

[27:57] The only thing I can think now is this war, how to help our people in this war, how to cancel Russia, how to end this war. And... the main change is that all my mind now is... is full with this war.

[28:19] And... the main change, maybe, that I became a military artist.

[28:34] I think that we will win!