

“An unforgettable experience”

I'm a participant of Yamaka Folk and Dance Group of Perm. I also teach singing at a college for arts and culture. It was in winter 2018 the director of Yamaka group came with the suggestion to me that there was a possibility to go to the Ethno England Festival. And of course, I said yes - it was an opportunity for me to show the culture of my country and to learn the culture of other countries. It would become a very unusual experience for me. So I agreed very soon.

It was my first visit to England, and I was happy because, this festival, I see it gives opportunity for young musicians to show themselves, to reveal themselves and to show their talent. And what was very

important that I got an opportunity to get acquainted with the characteristic features or peculiarities of music and art of the participants from different countries.

At first I learnt the music of all the participants from other countries. And then my turn came and I decided to learn with the other participants a very well known Russian song, Kalinka. It was a bit different from masterclasses with the other participants because I decided to include some dancing elements into my masterclass. I saw and felt that it was very enjoyable and interesting for the people who were a part of my masterclass and I felt they liked it.

At that time two years ago, I didn't have any experience of teaching, it was something unusual. Besides, I don't speak English and it was like a language wall for me. I couldn't use words and language for explanations. I try to explain everything with the help of my voice and with some musical elements, and the participants tried to follow me, and they did it rather well. The result was very good. So I understood that even without words and language, it was possible to find very much in common and to achieve good result.

On the first evening when we were gathered together and we were sitting around the fire, everybody presented himself or herself. That was the starting point when I began, when I understood that everything will be OK and I will manage and I'm surrounded by the people who I feel are similar with me. So I felt comfortably from the very first day. The other participants were very, very helpful. Each of them wanted to help me to do something for me. So they use their smartphones to use for Google translation so that it would be easier for me to explain what I wanted to explain. This atmosphere of support always was around me.



@ BLANCHE ILLUSTRATES

At one workshop we were learning singing a cappella. It was a song about English miners who died. For this workshop, we were taken to some premises which were dark and with an echo, and it was cool there. And it was done for purpose, so that we could feel very deeply the atmosphere of this song and the atmosphere of how it should be sung so that our feelings were similar with it. And when we began singing, this workshop that made all the creeps all over my body, not because of the cold, but because of the feelings. That was a very unforgettable experience for me.

And one more event I would like to recall when there was a big concert outside in Oxford in the square and the passers by were approaching us, listening to us and some of them were dancing with us. It was a very bright event for me. And it was probably for the first time when I experienced it, when I had such feelings. And of course I still remember it and will remember.

After this festival, when I come back home, what I felt was confidence. I became self-confident. It was an experience that I went to a foreign country alone without anybody who accompanied me, but I managed to do what I needed and there were people around me who helped me to feel

confident and who supported me. It was very important for me. When I came home I had a strong desire to do something, to do creative things, to be active, to learn more. I kept all those recordings I made during the workshops, and I was listening to them constantly for about three months. I made friends with many people there and I still keep in touch with them in social networks. I think it is a very, very good opportunity to learn something new, to enlarge your view of the world.

For me, it was important, from a professional point of view that I was able to learn different approaches in music, some peculiarities of singing because music is played and sung in different ways with different countries and nationalities. And now I have enlarged my professional abilities because of term participation.

Now I do use those approaches I learnt in England for singing even Russian songs.

I found some unity with the musicians from different countries. You unite young people from different countries and it contributed into forming a mutual understanding. You made those threads that connect and unite and tie us all together. Even without speaking foreign languages, it was not an obstacle for me to become a part of this big collective, of this big group, and I felt united with them. Every single person included or give something, as we say in Russian, some raisin into this big pie and so we became a unity, so to speak, and it was very, very great.

As told to: Lauren

“...what I felt was confidence. I became self-confident”

©Tandem Collective

