

CaucAsia

international coalition of gender journalists

international
information-analytical
electronic magazine
год выхода - второй
2006, the first issue, January

issue subject: Gender and Mass Culture

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photo by Saule Maylibaeva, Kazakhstan

Saule MAYLIBAEVA,
Kazakhstan

mass propaganda

PRESIDENT'S INAUGURATION:

winter deja-vu in Karaganda

It was just as back in the Communism times: crowds, non-committal words proclaimed from tribunes, a well-known governmental optimism. This is what our president's inauguration looked like. The main activity was taking place in the capital Astana, while Karaganda and other cities hosted virtual celebrations at stadiums, with plenty of people attending.

It was freezing cold on January 11, but this date is exactly when the Constitution wants every new Kazakh president to pledge faith to his people. Astana television live broadcast commented that despite weather forecasts said that there would be minus 43 degrees, in reality, there were only minus 30. And that the local people, who are awaiting the president's cortege to pass, seem to be warm enough because of their patriotic feelings.

As for Karaganda, here the air temperature was more likely to reach minus 43. Because of the freeze and the public day-off (because of inauguration, Wednesday was announced as a day-off, while the next Saturday was a regular working day), public transportation was really problematic. The celebrations at the stadium were scheduled for 10 a.m. I got to the place 10 minutes later, but discovered that the activities were not yet started. Despite the people were invited to come on 10, celebrations were postponed until 11.

Soon I realized that an hour of waiting would not be boring: the organizers were rushing around lining up participants of the show. I amused myself looking at the people's faces, both men's and women's and analyzing what they were occupied with. First congratulations were announced from the stage. Deputy akim of the region (a man of course) screamed from the stage about how happy and proud he was about the president and the people of Kazakhstan. I think, that was an appropriate order: on the first place, deputy akim put the president, and only after that he mentioned the people. Then the choir began singing; the soloist (men) sang Kazakh songs, the choir (mostly women) sang the second part.

The presenter of the celebrations (a woman) was once in a while addressing to the local residents: "The year passed was significant to the people of Karaganda because " She was also commenting the developments of the celebrations taking place in Astana, broadcasted at the screen. She was counting out: "30 minutes left until the beginning of inauguration "

A beautiful Ak Orda palace, the subject of pride to Kazakh people is on the screen, she commented. The palace has a lot of warm halls, plenty of eminent citizens invited. The palace did not look at all as the Karaganda stadium, where all of us were gathered, the people who wanted to hear

once again the pledge of our new-old president. We wanted to hear that he, the president, will continue taking care of our happy and carefree life.

So, this is the reason why we came here? Just as those who do not hear the pledges, won't get the portion of the president-promised welfare.

In the hall there were no seats; however it was not as cold as minus 40 degrees there, nobody seemed to want take off a coat. The picture reminded me some communist party congress, just as it was back in Soviet times. It was nice to watch the documentary on the main achievements of 2005, but it would not make you feel happier.

In the center of the stadium, there were people wearing uniform: the brass band at the stage (men), ranks of officers (men), cadets holding flags (men), internal troops (men).

After the talking was over, the celebration began. Besides other discomfort, I discovered another problem: right in front of me there was a line of seats, where women were "making waves." Following a special signal, they swayed blue-colored linens. The process entirely covered vision to those who was sitting at the next row.

"Why didn't I stay home? I would see everything on TV," I was thinking sadly. I looked at the opposite tribune - it was so beautiful! - the flags were simultaneously waving, the 'blue waves' were also nice to see. The children dressed in bright national costumes went to the stage; the audience rejoiced.

At the final of the event, we listened to the new national anthem; the presenter announced festive salute and festive concert, but the audience rushed towards the exit. At the exit, there is a huge billboard: "Nazarbaev - the people's elected representative," it reads.

The crowd storms every bus. Pressing ourselves to each other, we start the journey without any complaint.

A crowded bus - this is where there are plenty of women's faces! A conductor (a woman) orders us to prepare money. A passenger (a woman) asks he why isn't the journey free of charge, considering the inauguration day.

Conductor replies to her: "You can clap at the stadium free of charge, here you must pay." I came back home without a smile, with sad eyes and a bad mood. Who needs this show? Don't the authorities say all the time that they only want the people to feel fine? There was only one person who felt fine, and even he was in Astana. He celebrated his alleged victory, he marked people's alleged love towards him...

In reality, that was not him, who pledged that he'd be a good president; that were us, who promised him that we'd continue being controllable, complaisant and patient.

Olga LIPOVSKAYA,
Russia

on TV and not only there

NEW RUSSIAN TOOTSIES

since ancient times and medieval ages nothing had changed:
a man is a master of everything, in any place

I always wondered, why, not like others, I never liked neither Tolstoy, nor Fellini, nor Vladimir Axenov, nor, as well, the Mikhalkov family (altogether). In fact, Tarkovsky is not my favorite too. Later, when I became older, I figured out, that what the guys do is not "about me". When you read their interviews, articles about them, you found, that their observations were always about women who permanently are obliged to men, owe something to them. It is not exactly, that we owed to themselves, but to "men in general". Honestly speaking, it is not the main concern to me, more like a consequence. Growing older, I understood, that their "production", by no means, reflected my personal experience, but was presented as "universal". As if I did not have a voice, and they knew better what I want to say! My experience was not just distorted, it was replaced by an alien one. As if it was mine, somehow.

Therefore, the New Year Big Holidays arrived (in Russia, as you know, we now have 10 days of holidays after the New Year) I decided that I would watch some of the TV programs. It is the time, when everybody is free, and do the same - watch TV, the best time to share your pleasures with the people. During these holidays you could see many "stand up comedies", "Distorting mirrors" "Crazy laughing" programs which occupy our TV screens all the time. Watching them, I started to be interested in very interesting phenomena - transvestites. It is when one gender disguises oneself into another one. Usually (today it seems to be always) it is men dressing up like women.

In a sense I was surprised: why today (at least in Russian popular culture, in all this trash like "humor for everybody") there are so many women's images represented by men? There are so called "new Russian grannies", Yuri Galtzev, depicting queen Elizabeth, Maxim Galkin, who does not care about principles at all, the comedy series "Beware, it's Modern", with Alexander Rost and Dmitry Nagiev (the latter once said in an interview: "Women and dogs should know who is the master. If, for example, a dog does not know the difference between dirt and food on the street, you should teach it. If you don't show a woman, who is the tough one, she will become a burden. That is why you should hold a woman on a short leash"). There is also Verka Serdiuchka (presented by Alexander Danilko), selling herself out to Russia from Ukraine, for which she seems to be damned in Ukraine.

If we remember history of theater, or performance, we will see, that women were not allowed to the stage neither in ancient, nor in medieval times. (Curiously so, but it is a fact). This means, that men always had their right for art and creativity, for public space and, essentially - for power. If we try to remember the reverse situation - a woman presenting a man, like in "Twelfth night" by Shakespeare, or a well-known American musical "Victor-Victoria" (there Julia Andrews, actually is playing a man, who disguises himself as a woman), then it turns up, that a woman, playing a man is not funny. While the opposite case makes you laugh like crazy.

It is a historical reality, that women dressed up like men, when they wanted to occupy the space, otherwise inaccessible to her, to raise her social status. When men occupied women's space, it was not considered an occupation, because it belonged to them in full right, anyway. It is because women seemed not to have any social rights, she did not have her own name (first it was her father's then

her husband's), she did not have property (a married woman in Europe was losing all propriety rights, unmarried one had to live as miserable dependant). Later on, with the changes in social and economic relations, men occupied women's space, because gender relations in cultural sphere never changed, and their right for it remained intact. Therefore, when "Verka", Dmitry Nagiev and other "new Russian grannies" perform as "women" on TV, they substitute, or replace our experience, dear women, just like Fellini, Tarkovsky and all those "mikhalkovs-konchalovsky's", only on a level of mass culture. And women-viewers do not reflect on the fact that a man on the stage depicting notoriously evil "tescha" (mother-in-law of a husband) - in big boots on his wiry legs, he in fact is again telling them what they are supposed to look like in his view.

Therefore again, and again, she is not allowed to speak for herself. Of course in our mass culture we also have examples of humor about husbands, who are drunkards, but "whatever bad, he is mine". The problem here is, that a female context in mass culture (at least in Russia) does not challenge traditional patriarchal order. A woman is always attached to a man, all gender relations (he beats her, he drinks, he cheats on her and abandons his children) - are perceived as a norm, it goes without saying. Men at the same time dance on the stage dressed in women's clothes



photo by Galina Petriashvili, Georgia

replacing our real lives' experience. More accurately, they steal it by using their old methods.

Since ancient time and medieval ages nothing really changed: men feel themselves as masters in any space, and we, as women can only claim our space and wait for permission. If it will be granted to us. These were my thoughts, when I was "lying on my back, watching TV". Mass culture is in a sense, derivation and reflection of culture as such; it is a thick layer, not so easy to break through. To tell the truth, sometimes one does not want to break through.

Am I right?

Lali Nikolava,
Georgia

hooliganism

about us FIGHTING SEXISM

at least,
they now know
the definition



Even a brief survey of our medias would pronounce sentence on sexism. The pages of local magazines, and minutes of advertisements on TV shows are full of half naked or absolutely nude figures, dirty humor, discussions on "real" and "experienced" men. One of these experienced was so direct that said in the interview to one of the local magazines: "The most expensive women I had, cost me 500 bucks. But she was so-o-o god!" What would you say hearing this remark? It is not enough if you just feel sorry for the guy, because there are too many of them. It is necessary to work with people like him. If he doesn't care about himself, we have to force him care about women. We, the GenderMediaCaucasus Journalists' Association, decided to hold an action. We entitled it

Stop-DescriM Media Ball. We worked really hard, finding examples of discrimination through the monitoring of TV channels and 'glossy' magazines. We held a seminar for journalists and prepared a corresponding publication. Made series of posters. Shot the social advertisement video. The project was entitled Journalists against Sexism in Mass Culture, it was financed by the Women's Program of the national Soros Foundation. As we did not have much money, there was plenty of volunteer work to do.

At the ball, I was in charge for contacts with media; I was one of those who was inviting colleagues to the event. The reaction of male journalists turned out to be the most interesting. Some of them could not understand the matter of our protest: "journalists against what??" they kept asking. They would become less enthusiastic as soon as they would realize what the word 'sexism' really meant. Anyway, all of them promised to come; especially as we announced our plan to award the most sexist media sources.

At the walls, we displayed cites by our medias: "A real woman doesn't talk much, she always looks good and always smiles, she knows that a man is a free personality."

Waltz music started the ball. The public looked too serious, however; the audience was sedate and mature, but we did our best to have fun along with our invited colleagues. There were plenty of quotations and parodies displayed, we tried to turn 'upside down' usual situations shown in the local adverts.

The most interesting is that journalists had no problem in understanding our irony. Only a couple of colleagues among the women's movement did not realize it. "What did you want to say?" they asked us, "it is not really serious."

We did not want to be 'really serious' instead. We only wanted to present an action, and not a professional seminar or a scientific debate. The main goal for us was to show our journalists that there is something really wrong in our society. And I think we achieved the goal.



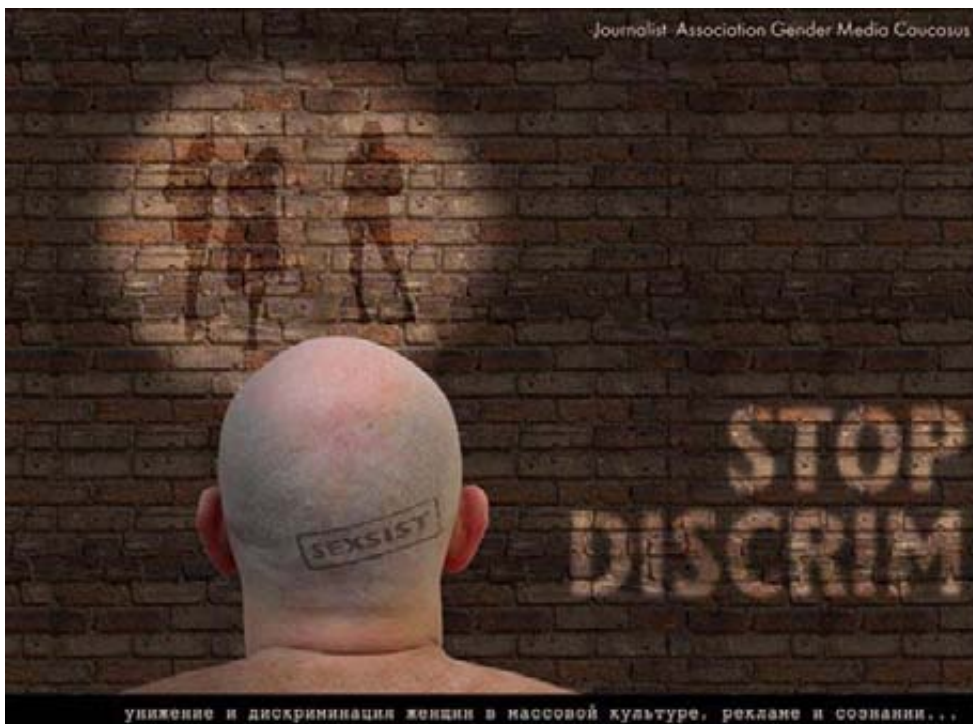
poster by Nonna Labadze, Georgia

The event was widely covered by local medias; there were a lot of gender-correct reports on the ball. Rustavi-2, one of the leading TV channels, dedicated to the ball some 30 minutes of its morning air. Our colleague, the member of GenderMediaCaucasus Association, Roza Kukhalashvili was invited to speak live in the channel's morning air. The most surprising and pleasant was that the host of the program asked Roza very adequate, gender-smart, and solidary questions. It was very important to us as at the media ball, we awarded the channel as being one of the most sexist media sources in Georgia. A report on Mze TV channel was just as convincing. Its author began working at the dress rehearsal of the ball; she spent with us almost entire day that preceded the event; in the evening Mze TV channel broadcasted great analytical report on the topic. In general, it seemed to me that women are more likely to quickly realize the matter of gender problems. However, there was a good reportage at radio Freedom, prepared by man. When organizing the ball, we were prepared to harsh criticism; but we received support from those we would not expect and some disapproval from those who were expected to be our allies. This life is full of paradoxes! But we are now sure that we need to continue the dialogue with our journalist colleagues and to share with them everything we consider important. And if we are not boring, we will be heard by plenty of people.



photo by Diana Petriashvili, Georgia

Media Ball photo-reportage is available at the GenderMediaCaucasus Association website:
<http://www.gmc.ge/images/MediaBal.html>



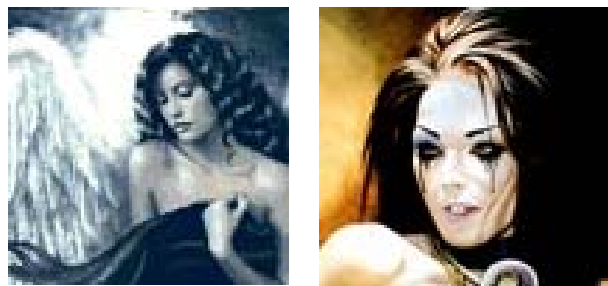
poster by Nonna Labadze, Georgia

Alma BEKTURGANOVA ANDERSEN,
Kazakhstan/Denmark

forum

BE PRETTY AND KIND

don't like the idea? just remain a bitchy vampire than other images unavailable



Typical avatars at the forum

For many people, who live in a foreign country and do not know its language, internet turns into a real relaxation. All you need is to find the web site where people speak Russian.

I remember, I was thinking that I'd get replies to the questions that I hesitated to ask my husband. For example, why don't Danish people eat hot dishes for a diner? Or, it would be a real pleasure for me to speak about the success of my son, who began playing basketball.

To begin, it was necessary to register choosing a nickname and an avatar. I just filled in my real name and my own photograph. For some reason, I did not even think that I was supposed to be more or less anonymous. Among the forum members, there are girls with the nicknames as Pretty, Blondie, Sweaty and alike. The forum is quite feminine; there are only some 200 men out of the total number of 1000 users. The statistics reflects reality: the majority of Russian-speaking residents of Denmark are the so-called Danish wives. When I first appeared at the forum, I was welcomed by other users in the following manner: one more Danish wife here! That was the first shock for me - my entire life I considered myself as a strong personality, and then, suddenly after 40 years I turned into 'just wife.' Next surprise that I faced was the discussion of my avatar: the users would not believe that I used my own photograph. At first, I even enjoyed being the innovator, there appeared other persons who followed my example. Later, however, all of us changed our minds; I chose another userpic, a fat mermaid flying in the sky. That was exactly how I was feeling then: relaxed from constant stress situations, gaining weight and hanging in the air... The mermaid is the tribute to my second motherland, and my favorite personage of my most famous Danish namesakes.

This identification makes me feel way more comfortable than previously. With my business-like photographed image, I felt like naked in the surrounding of half-nude coquettish avatars. For some reason, the majority of female forum users prefer avatars with images of young girls; those with slim legs, sexy lips, and delicate pretty faces. Soon I realized the reason: this selection is exactly what corresponding internet resources can propose you. Avatars are mostly of four kinds: those with children (little girls), animals, men and women. Men are, as a rule, brawny and bearing arms. Women are of two kinds - either nice and pretty, or bitchy-vampire like. Nothing else available.

Later I realized that adult and successful women chose neutral nicknames and avatars; just names, for example: Tanja, Nadja, tata, Dagmar; and images with landscapes, interesting aphorisms and alike.

The subject of discussions is also really interesting! Is it possible for a woman not to work? This question was not asked referring to men, for some reason. Can a woman be happy in her third marriage? I would ask an analogous question a man.

I also do not like references to feminism. Despite all of us live in the 'feminist country' and use all its privileges, we keep using the word 'feminism' in its critical meaning

Now I have to choose between educating these people I meet online and changing my avatar and nickname to more common. I don't know if I would be able to play the role of Pretty or Blondy, and how long would I be able to play that role.

Polina MILORADOVICH,
Georgia

what it feels like

AN AWESOME GIRL HIGH IN THE MOUNTAINS

internet as the mean of existence

During some five years, I do not use pen and paper, I practically do not use telephone and really seldom go to the offices of those medias I work for. I even don't see my friends as often as previously, as we got used to e-mailing each other or to talk via Skype program instead of meeting together.

Each time I am online, I avoid porno sites, boring financial and sports portals, the revelations of housewives and lovers. Recently, I avoid chats as well... What am I looking for in the internet? Nothing special. I only enter a couple friendly websites, and then follow the links displayed by my online friends. The time spend in the internet usually irritates my husband: "You know what? Go marry your computer." I feel like suggesting him to marry his car, but oftentimes I do not say anything. He has the motive for being irritated.

...Once I occasionally entered a teen-chat. I don't even remember the reason why I stopped there and read those naive posts of young kids. Some guy shared his melancholy with his chat-mates, and I just replied him in his manner, just as I would be his age. Take it easy, I advised, life is fun you know. The guy replied straight away, describing his entire life; he told me about his parents (Tajik father and Ukrainian mother), about his studies (the second year at the law school), complained that he did not really like to study there and that he failed to make friends with his classmates... In each his post the guy was sending me portions of the details of his life, he expected me to do the same. "Have you graduated from high school yet?"-"This summer" -"What do you plan to study?" - "Journalism" - "You are very smart, I am sure you pass the exams!" I just went back to my youth, I dropped those 20 years that passed since my youth, and spoke to the guy. I wanted to quit the dialogue, but it was difficult just to close the door in front of him. Especially, when he wrote: "You're an awesome girl; will you be back here tomorrow? I'll be waiting for you."

Here we go - a kid will be waiting for me at some weird web chat. Because I am an awesome girl, you know. The next evening I logged in again, because I promised to do so.

We made friends, and the boy now believed that I am not only just awesome, cool and hot, but there might be nobody in this world as good as I am... I decided to say good buy to him, but did not really know how to do it. It seemed to me impossible to say that I was an adult lady that was making fun of the kid. A long fatal leave could be a perfect solution, I decided. But it was hard to imagine the place, where there is no internet. Well, in Georgian mountains, theoretically. Finally I made up a legend: my dad is a herder, he got a new job, and now we have to move high in the mountains for two years. Maybe even three. It is a pity that I won't be able to enter journalism department, but what should I do about this strict mountaineer father of mine! God buy, little boy! That was it, I closed the door; and I hope that I did not hurt the boy's feelings. I even think that it is very useful for a man to imagine an awesome girl that lives somewhere high in the mountains.



photo by Galina Petriashvili, Georgia

THE OTHER internet



www.owl.ru

NEEDS THE SUPPORT

*help
if you want
the portal helps
you*

The Information portal "Women and Society" was created by the Regional Public Organization "East-West: Women's Innovation Projects" (Moscow) after modernization of the web-site "Open Women Line" into a social and educational informational Internet resource focused on promotion of gender equality.

The owl.ru domain appeared in Internet on November 20, 1996. Initially the web-site "Open women line", in late 2000 it was transformed into the Information portal "Women and Society". For nearly 10 years we have tried to fill this information space with materials related to gender and women's movement. The portal presents a broad range of informational and analytical materials, which reflect women's involvement in significant public processes in addition to cookery, shopping, beauty treatment, rest, etc.

The portal structure is optimal for its goals and contains permanent and on-line sections. Currently, the volume of information is about 300 Mb, which demonstrates that the portal has turned into a real archive of thematic information, accumulated over time. The meter on the main page of the portal records on average 3500 appeals per month. The portal "Women and Society" takes 10th place among 1854 cited Russian Internet resources in the category "Society and Politics/ Non-Profit organizations" by the thematic citing index, which determines the "prestige" (significance) of an Internet resource (as of January 9, 2006). The portal allows for electronic subscription to news both as digests and as electronic texts. As of December 31, 2005, there were registered 1115 regular users. The geographic scope of portal users from different countries covers practically the whole world. Majority of users come from Russia (39-40%); the portal is also popular in the USA, Europe, Ukraine, Germany, Great Britain, Belarus, Kazakhstan, etc.

The portal "Women and Society" serves as a tool for network interaction and external relations of the women's community, namely, among other NGOs and mass media, thus allowing for promotion of the topic "Women and Society" to a higher level: to highlight socially-relevant women's problems and to inform the society about achievements in the area of gender equality.

We look for funding sources for the portal's operations and development on a regular basis. Your feedback, comments and recommendations are very helpful in this regard. We shall be grateful to all those who write to us! (editors' address is ed@owl.ru). Thanks to your letters we know in practice what is moral support and how helpful it may be. It is important for us to know that we are in demand because we do serious work important for all.

We have to appeal to everyone, primarily to regular portal users, with a request for financial support. The portal operates as part of the program "Women and Society" run by the Regional Public Organization "East-West: Women's Innovation Projects". Currently this program is funded only through private and corporate donations for hosting (technical and informational accompaniment).

If you can help us, if you want the accumulated information to remain available in the Internet, if you want the portal to remain alive - support it! We can preserve this unique Internet space only together with you.

We are grateful to everyone who responds to our appeal.

*Galina GRISHINA,
Director General, Regional Public Organization "East-West:
Women's Innovation Projects"*

*FOR THOSE
WILLING AND ABLE
TO TRANSFER MONEY*

BANKING INFORMATION:

*Recipient of the transfer: ROO "Vostok-Zapad: ZhIP", INN: 7729042643
Account in Rbl. N 40703810238310100484 in
Lublinsky Branch 7977 of the Savings Bank
of Russia, Moscow
BIK 044525225, Correspondent account N
30101810400000000225
Account in \$USA: 40703840438310200484 in
Savings Bank of Russia, Lublinskoye Branch
7977, Moscow, Russia, SWIFT code: SABR
RU MM*

*IMPORTANT: code name of the payment
should read "donations for "Women and
Society" program", which allows to treat this
transfer as funds earmarked for a special
purpose.*

*Amount of the payment depends on your wish
and means. Please bear in mind that the bank
transfer involves a banking fee (in Moscow,
the Savings Bank charges 3% of the amount
of payment).*

*Electronic copy of the Savings Bank of
Russia receipt (in Russian) owlkvit.doc may
be downloaded from
<http://www.owl.ru/owlkvit.doc>; also, we may
send it by e-mail upon request addressed at
ed@owl.ru).*

Irina LOBOVIK, Valery RUDIY,
Ukraine

show-things

POP MUSIC SUCCESS

is it possible to be free of sexism and violence?

Once, in a private conversation with an editor of Ukrainian radio, he told me: "none of the popular female singers like to recall the time, when they were younger and less popular."

A female performer's way to the pop-music's Olympus is quite dramatic: from the beginning she is not the one, who chooses. She is the one who gets chosen by: a composer, who is to decide wither she sings their song or not; a radio or television representative, who considers broadcasting the song; and many others. She depends on these people, who make decisions on how they promote the song and how to promote her name. As a rule, these decision-makers are male. There is also a financial factor: in order to promote a performers, it is necessary to invest in them. In an ideal situation, a performer's father is an oil company co-owner, or a bank cofounder. But if not?

Today, a life of a young woman singer is full of risks, that appear during her tours, video-making, contracts that involve unknown persons and other. This is why singers, either consciously or unconsciously, avoid sexual harassment. A marriage with a man who is also involved in show business could be theoretically a proper guarantee. Besides making you sexually-safe a producer husband can be a perfect tool for defending his wife's financial interests. Every concert tour turns into a family business; this might be an explanation for the high number of inter-show business marriages at Ukrainian music market.

Show business today is the area of a strict consumerism. As a rule, men pay for their pleasure to see a young and sexy woman at the stage. As younger as better. The best example in this regard is our star Alina Grossu. This is a ten-years- old girl, dressed in long white boots, white shorts and other sexy accessories. Those very adult stage moves represent a part of Alina's image.

Stage images of our female stars are quite the same and aimed to satisfy the most primitive tastes. The standards are the same for all of them: an extremely sexy dress, loud



photo by Umida Akhmedova, Uzbekistan

make-up, sexy motion of the body...

It is also common for show business representatives to step over the limits of show business and to enter politics. Presently, Ukraine is awaiting local and parliamentary elections; concert pop-show are a part of the elections campaigns. Besides this, a part of the Ukrainian show business is presently aspiring towards getting into party lists. But this is a different topic already.

APROPOS: monitoring

IN UKRAINE, THE MUSIC BROADCASTED AT THE NATIONAL RADIO WAS STUDIED

under the initiative of Men's Adaptation Center and the team of gender initiatives Olga

The air was monitored by two groups of volunteers during one month. The results of the monitoring were not published yet, we are to become the first who shares certain figures with the audience.

Women soloists of pop music bands made 48-56%, in rock bands their number is 7-11%, while alternative music's index for women's vocal made 22-25 %.

Among Ukrainian-language pop bands, there were 47-52% women soloists. At the same time, in Ukrainian rock and alternative music women's indexes are way higher. For example, Ukrainian language women rock soloists registered made 17-23% of the total; performers monitored; in the alternative music, this index made 37-44%.

It was a surprise to see as many women in the kind of music that used to be considered traditionally 'male'. This is a new and a very interesting tendency.

Vladimir KHANAS
Ternopol, Ukraine

Olexander LIBERNY,
Ukraine

microphone

ROCKING THE WORLD

more women appear in the rock music



photo by Eduard Kisilinsky, Ukraine

I doubt that fans of Beattles, Mashina Vremeni or Kino would imagine women as the part of these bands, especially if they'd write texts or compose the music. But the situation is being changed. We could witness it at Nivroku-2005, the 11th International festival of Youth Art, that took place in Ukraine. Among 20 groups that were selected for participation, 11 had women soloists and text authors.

Here is how the women participants commented on it.

Natalya KOMOLOVA,
PR Manager of TET TV company:

- I am a classical representative of Soviet 'gilded youth;' I grew up listening rock-music that has always been a protest against and an alternative to the existing rule. My heroes were Mashina Vremeni, DDT, Boris Grebenshikov, and other symbols of that epoch. But back than, nobody really cared about the problem that rock music was that sang by men. Today, I am glad and surprised because of the fact that women entered it. Our festival demonstrated the variety of styles! I was astonished with the performance of Faktychno Sami band front-woman. Irena Karpa, she is quite provocative and aggressive, remaining to be a delicate and a very smart person. Women's rock - this is something new and really interesting!

Yulia KUTSENKO,
Khorta rock-group soloist:

- Following continuous tries of working in pop, jazz, and classical music, I found myself in rock. Rock was my perfect "clothes" I chose for communicating with this world. I always wanted to speak about the importance of women's spirituality, their wisdom and patience. For us, the Ukrainians, it is of a special importance, considering our historic and political context. This is why I sing in Ukrainian language. As older our country becomes in its new status, as more interesting a woman's rock-realization is. Analogous tendency can be seen in the world's rock music. Today, rock is a very comfortable form of women's creative work; it even defends a woman from the cynicism and depravity of show business.

Diana PETRIASHVILI,
Georgia

mirages

A MODEL-LOOKING GIRL *as a an obsession*

One of the magazines I contribute stories for, decided to renew photos of its authors. The authors were asked to come anytime by 6 p.m. I combed my hair and put some makeup on my face.

The photographer pulled me outside, made me take off my bright red coat and said that I was supposed to make a smart face and smile.

The whole big deal took some ten minutes. I was aloud to put on my coat and to go home. I rushed towards the bus stop.

"Excuse me!" someone called me from behind.

I turned my head. It was an old woman holding the hand of a teenage girl.

"Are you a model?" she asked panting.

"Am I a what?!"

"We tried to catch up with that guy with photo camera, but he entered the building and the door locked. It is a studio, isn't it?"

"No, it is not, it's only "

"my granddaughter is very photogenic. Extremely photogenic! Just look at her Go ahead and smile, Tamuna!" she pushed the girl.

Tamuna, a child of some thirteen years old, smiled inertly.

"We sent her to the beauty contest last year, but they didn't like her," the lady continued, "you have to have friends anywhere in this country, you know," she complained bitterly.

"You know " "She is very photogenic! She might be a bit ashamed now, but she is just a pefect beauty on the photo Sorry, don't have photos here "

"But we will bring the photos whenever they say. How old are you?" she asked suddenly. "Twenty five, but "

"Great! She is only fifteen. You need a younger generation of models there, don't you?"

I got mad.

"Wait a minute," I said, "did I ever tell you that I am a model?!"

The woman suspiciously looked at my face and my sportswear. "But that guy was taking pictures of you! He had that huge camera... So, you are not a model?" She looked at me again and stated:

"You are not looking like one, but there are different kinds of models. That's why I thought you could be one of them."



photo by Tsovinar Nazarova, Georgia

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Translation:

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supported by

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CaucAsia

INTERNATIONAL COALITION



GenderMediaCaucasus

JOURNALISTS' ASSOCIATION

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