

# Radik Tyulyush

Text **Andy Bauer**

In August 2015, stranded on the side of a road with three young Tuvan men trying to fix a wheel that had been demolished by washboards, I looked out across the landscape and the 200 km of rolling mountains, taiga and prairie between us and the nearest service station.

For better or worse, I was 24 hours into a 36-hour trip to the final southwest Tuva outpost town of Kyzyl-Haya, in the autonomous Russian republic that was home to the late Aldyn-ool Sevek, deemed by many Tuvans as the greatest kargyraa singer of all time. Determined to continue onward to find the throat-singer's relatives, I left the broken-down car behind at about 2 a.m. and decided to hitchhike, eventually arriving at my destination a few days later, where I met Sevek's brother to discuss the origins of what is known as Tuvan throat singing.

Upon returning to Kyzyl, the capital of Tuva, I met a young, well-known throat-singer by the name of Radik Tyulyush, who was also interested in Sevek's legacy, and thus keen to learn about my trip.

That day in August of 2015, as he sat perched across from me in a Kyzyl restaurant I could quickly tell that he is a man of honor and is passionate about Tuvan culture. He is a gifted

vocalist and the youngest member of one of the most successful ethnic ensembles ever: Huun Huur Tu. Son of a chauffeur and doctor, Tyulyush learned throat singing, folk music, melodies and instruments from his grandfather and uncle at a hunting site deep in the taiga during the summers of his youth. He has mastered the igil, byzaanchy, shoor and other Tuvan instruments. Capable of producing both traditional and contemporary Tuvan music, Tyulyush has released four albums with Tuvan rock band "Uer" and worked with the band "Yat-kha", touring internationally, releasing two albums and winning first prize in the BBC Radio 3 World Music competition. In 2013, he released his second solo album, Chalama, which features new traditional Tuvan music as well as interpretations of traditional classics.

In September this year, I caught up Tyulyush, who was touring China with Huun Huur Tu. As we walked the streets of Beijing, he explained to me his interpretation of life and described how he thinks the human race has changed.

"We need to keep everything inside of us and pass it down, but music needs to also reflect and take part in the changes occurring in the world. I am neither a herder

nor a hunter by trait. In fact, I carry a cellphone and travel by car, not by horse," Tyulyush said, adding that developing traditions in the contemporary world requires careful thought.

He said people should listen to their elders, summing up his motivation for being a throat singer by saying "I sing for my ancestors".

What makes Tyulyush's kargyraa singing stand out from others is that he sings with his mind and his heart. He fortifies my belief that musicians who think differently can move listeners in the most profound ways.

Tyulyush is working with Chinese and American musicians on a new studio recording and tour project titled Living Mythologies that he said "breaks all language barriers", incorporating aspects of multiculturalism, poetic use of seven languages and unprecedented arrangements encompassing a vast array of instruments for all originals songs.

It was confirmed to me that Tyulyush is a musician who truly thinks differently when I asked if this new ensemble plays is contemporary, traditional or experimental music.

"It is something that will be thought of as deeply beautiful for many years, for many centuries to come," he said.

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