



VIRSKY UKRAINIAN NATIONAL DANCE COMPANY

Wednesday, October 28, 2009, at 7:30pm

Foellinger Great Hall

THE ACT OF GIVING

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PROGRAM

Virsky Ukrainian National Dance Company

Direct from Kyiv, Ukraine
Official Tour of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts of Ukraine

Myroslav Vantukh
General and Artistic Director
Arts Manager
National Artist of Ukraine
National Taras Shevchenko Award Winner

Ukraine, My Ukraine!
Choreography by Myroslav Vantukh,
National Artist of Ukraine
Music composed by S. Ponomariov, Honored Artist
of Ukraine, and Oleksandr Popov, Artist
Performed by the company

Povzunets
Choreography by Pavlo Virsky, founder of the Virsky
Ukrainian National Dance Company
Music composed by Abram Khelemsky
Performed by a male group of soloists
of the company

Khmil
Choreography by Pavlo Virsky, founder of the Virsky
Ukrainian National Dance Company
Music composed by Iakov Lapinskii
Performed by the company

Hopak from the opera *Taras Bulba*
Choreography by K. Sergeev
Music composed by V. Solovyov-Sedoy
Performed by the company

Kozachok
Performed by female dancers of the company

Kyiv Fellows
Choreography by Pavlo Virsky, founder of the Virsky
Ukrainian National Dance Company
Music composed by V. Rozhdestvensky
Performed by the company

Verbichenka
Choreography by S. Segel, People's Artist of Ukraine
Music composed by A. Mukiiia
Performed by female dancers of the company

Zaporozhtsi
Choreography by Pavlo Virsky, founder of the Virsky
Ukrainian National Dance Company
Music composed by Iakov Lapinskii
Performed by male dancers of the company

20-minute intermission

The Carpathians
Choreography by Pavlo Virsky, founder of the Virsky
Ukrainian National Dance Company
Traditional music of Ukraine
Performed by the company

Podolianochka
Choreography by Pavlo Virsky, founder of the Virsky
Ukrainian National Dance Company
Music composed by Igor Ivashchenko
Performed by two members of the company

Gypsy Dance
Performed by the company

Shevchyky
Choreography by Myroslav Vantukh, National Artist
of Ukraine
Music composed by Georgy Zavorodnii, People's
Artist of Ukraine
Performed by the company

The Bells (Precarpathian Dance)
Choreography by A. Bondarev, Honorary Artist
of Ukraine
Staging by I. Kolesnikov
Music composed by H. Redko
Performed by the company

Moriaky
Choreography by Pavlo Virsky, founder of the Virsky
Ukrainian National Dance Company
Music composed by Iakov Lapinskii
Performed by male dancers of the company

Chumack Joy
Choreography by Pavlo Virsky, founder of the Virsky
Ukrainian National Dance Company
Musical arrangement by Igor Ivashchenko
Performed by male dancers of the company

Hopak (Ukrainian folk dance)
Choreography by Pavlo Virsky, founder of the Virsky
Ukrainian National Dance Company
Music composed by Boris Yarovytsky, People's
Artist of Ukraine
Performed by the company

Program subject to change

The Virsky Ukrainian National Dance Company
appears by arrangement with:
Columbia Artists Management LLC
Producer: Andrew S. Grossman
Associate: W. Seton Ijams
1790 Broadway, New York, NY 10019

PROGRAM NOTES

Ukraine, My Ukraine!
Choreography by Myroslav Vantukh, National Artist
of Ukraine
Music composed by S. Ponomariov, Honored Artist
of Ukraine, and Oleksandr Popov, Artist
Performed by the company

In their tradition, bread and salt on an embroidered
towel are symbols of the sincerity and kindness
of the Ukrainian people. This is a greeting dance
encompassing the vast and diverse regions of
Ukraine. Each region has its own local flavor, its own
dialect through dance—and here, all these wonderful
flavors are united into a single dance just as the
various flowers join in a garland.

Povzunets (Cossack playful dance)
Choreography by Pavlo Virsky, founder of the Virsky
Ukrainian National Dance Company
Music composed by Abram Khelemsky
Performed by a male group of soloists
of the company

One of the more popular and well-known dances for
spectators, *Povzunets* is a light-hearted jaunt that
demonstrates the technical ability of the performers
through impressive tricks and an amazing, almost
inexhaustible technical mastery. The ingenuity, joy,
bravery, and free-spiritedness of the Zaporizhia
Cossacks is highly valued by the Ukrainian people,
and their songs evoke feelings of audacity, courage,
and abandon.

Khmil
Choreography by Pavlo Virsky, founder of the Virsky
Ukrainian National Dance Company
Music composed by Iakov Lapinskii
Performed by the company

Performed in folk traditions, *Khmil* is a choreographic
performance of boys walking in the evening.
Accompanied by the Ukrainian folk music "Oh
Khmil, My Khmil," the merrymaking also evokes
male staidness and respect. The evening is
enhanced by the appearance of a female soloist,
who demonstrates incredible skill. She invites the
other women to join with the men in performing this
traditional dance. Colorful male and female costumes
and traditional music coalesce in this ancient
Ukrainian dance.

Hopak (Ukrainian folk dance) from the opera
Taras Bulba
Choreography by K. Sergeev
Music composed by V. Solovyov-Sedoy
Performed by the company

The great Ukrainian hero Taras Bulba fought against
the Polish nobility with the help of his son Ostap.
Hopak as performed by Ostap symbolizes strength,
courage, and the kind hearts of the Ukrainian
Cossacks. As Ostap skillfully performs this expressive
and light dance, he shares with us the invincible spirit
of Ukraine.

Kozachok

Performed by female dancers of the company

A very happy dance full of delicate, lyrical scenes, this work as a whole is a bright and dynamic narration about Ukrainian women. The lively costumes, beautiful music, and high professionalism of the choreography—all of this will assure a brilliant performance for spectators.

Kyiv Fellows

Choreography by Pavlo Virsky, founder of the Virsky Ukrainian National Dance Company

Music composed by V. Rozhdestvensky

Performed by the company

This dance showcases youth in competition and is accompanied by comic and even satirical parts. It celebrates the shrewdness and vigor often associated with youth, while also finding humor in the boastfulness and arrogance that accompany it. The competition is filled with passion and shades and swings of mood, however, the audience is able to guess the distinct characters of each of the competitors. This dance is typically Ukrainian but is known in other countries as well.

Verbichenka (Little Willow)

Choreography by S. Segel, People's Artist of Ukraine

Music composed by A. Mukiiia

Performed by female dancers of the company

Verbichenka is a female dance-allegory. In the words of a Ukrainian song, "the willow near the water is like a song, like fate."

The curtain is raised. A beautiful image that reproduces the willow appears on the stage—girls with weeping willow branches bending over the water. A lyrical round dance begins, exhibiting female gracefulness and plasticity of movement.

The wind begins to rustle, developing into a storm that bends the willow trees to the ground. Nevertheless, the willow fights back to stand and finally weathers the storm.

Silence.

Then the sun emerges, as the dance ends cheerfully, with life continuing on.

Zaporozhtsi (National Ukrainian Dance of Cossacks)

Choreography by Pavlo Virsky, founder of the Virsky Ukrainian National Dance Company

Music composed by Iakov Lapinskii

Performed by male dancers of the company

This dance mimics the warfare rituals of the Zaporizhia warrior-host and *hetmen* (military commander) Bohdan Khmelnytsky. The legendary Zaporizhian Cossacks, vigorous defenders of their country and heroes from Ukraine's ancient past, partake in a soldier game before the audience. Equipped in their Cossack uniforms complete with weapons dating from the 12th century, the dancers perform their routine to music that evokes a distinct military romanticism.

The Carpathians

Choreography by Pavlo Virsky, founder of the Virsky Ukrainian National Dance Company

Traditional music of Ukraine

Performed by the company

Called by a *trembita* (a long wooden horn used by the locals of the Carpathian Mountains) after a long workday, the youth gather at a *polonyma* (a plateau in the mountains, usually covered with thick grass where livestock graze) to sing and dance. The dance describes various regions of Carpathia—Gutsulschyna, Bukonya, Zacarpattia—each region having its own costumes, character, rites and customs, songs, and dances. It is an ethnographic illustration composed of 3 main parts: a song of the mountains, a song of the water, and a song of the sun. The composition is a bright and dynamic representation of the Carpathian people.

Podolianochka (Girl from the Podilla Region)

Choreography by Pavlo Virsky, founder of the Virsky Ukrainian National Dance Company

Music composed by Igor Ivashchenko

Performed by two members of the company

This is a choreographic image full of subtle lyricism. It speaks of spring and the pure love between two young people. The tender musical accompaniment complements this graceful dance.

Gypsy Dance

Performed by the company

This is the classical dance of Bess Arabian gypsies. The gypsies' camp is made up of happy music and passionate dances performed by young men and

girls. It is a competition among the gypsies, with one group trying to win victory over the other group in the dance. The scene changes to a similar competition among the young gypsy girls.

Shevchyky (Shoemakers)

Choreography by Myroslav Vantukh, National Artist of Ukraine

Music composed by Georgy Zavhorodnii, People's Artist of Ukraine

Performed by the company

This dance speaks of an ancient profession of humanity, that of the shoemaker. While teaching his apprentice how to make shoes, the senior shoemaker also teaches him to adopt a joyful and respectful attitude toward the profession and toward one's elders.

The Bells (Precarpathian Dance)

Choreography by A. Bondarev, Honorary Artist of Ukraine

Staging by I. Kolesnikov

Music composed by H. Redko

Performed by the company

This is a lyrical dance exemplifying pure and true love. Two young people in love start dancing. They are overwhelmed with feelings; their small bells tinkle like tiny strings of the soul. They invite young boys and girls who also hold small bells to join with them. It is an ancient tradition of the Precarpathian region and a hymn to purity and beauty.

Moriaky (Sailors)

Choreography by Pavlo Virsky, founder of the Virsky Ukrainian National Dance Company

Music composed by Iakov Lapinskii

Performed by male dancers of the company

With great pride in their heritage, the sailors of the Black Sea Fleet are the dignity and hope of an independent Ukraine. The vivacity and ingenuity of the sailors can captivate us. Their dashing appearance on the stage can remind us of the fresh wind. This dance tells the story of Peter Pipeclay, the energetic and fickle beauty of the sea, and Peter's abiding love for it. In *Moriaky*, the dance churns like the foam of the hollow sea, unwinding headily like a maelstrom that sprays showers all around. Then but a moment later we share in a quiet chat on the ship's deck with the crew responding in unison to each cue. The crew then erupts into a merry dance that evokes ideas of endurance and durability, both characteristic qualities of sailors.

Chumack Joy

Choreography by Pavlo Virsky, founder of the Virsky Ukrainian National Dance Company

Musical arrangement by Igor Ivashchenko

Performed by male dancers of the company

This is a choreographic picture from the past of the Ukrainian people. It is a humorous piece but at the same time is sensitive in nature, depicting the adventures of four poor men whose poverty forced them to migrate to the southern part of the country to make a living (such people were referred to as *Chumacks*). The long and difficult journey taught them to appreciate the small tokens of life, such as receiving a new pair of shoes. Admirable

at first sight, this dance is even more impressive when watched several times, as the choreography is interwoven with a mastery of drama.

Hopak (Ukrainian folk dance)

Choreography by Pavlo Virsky, founder of the Virsky Ukrainian National Dance Company

Music composed by Boris Yarovynsky, People's Artist of Ukraine

Performed by the company

From time immemorial, no Ukrainian program has been complete without the hopping dance. With almost every dance step being accompanied by a hop exclamation, this dance eventually came to be known as the *Hopak*. This dance form is composed of numerous bravura solo performances and breathtaking feats, with spectacular, dynamic, and intricate choreographic formations of the company. The female dancers are adorned with the most beautiful blouses, skirts, chaplets, necklaces, and colorful headbands, which are representative of the great culture of Ukraine. With its incredible choreography, *Hopak* is the quintessential Ukrainian art form and is a fitting way in which to end this spectacular program.

VIRSKY UKRAINIAN NATIONAL DANCE COMPANY

Staff

Myroslav M. Vantukh, General Director, Art Director, Hero of Ukraine, People's Artist of Ukraine, Prize Winner of the National Taras Shevchenko Award, Head of the National Choreographic Union of Ukraine, Professor, Academician

Halyna M. Vantukh, Choreographer, People's Artist of Ukraine

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Viktor S. Zavadskiy, Manager, Honorary Culture Worker of Ukraine

Serghiy A. Belkyn, Performance Manager, Honorary Culture Worker of Ukraine

Leonid M. Ukrainets, Stage Manager

Valentyna I. Hanzia, Costume Manager

Viktoriya A. Ivanenko, Costumer

Svitlana O. Shuvalova, Costumer

Valentyn P. Dorosh, Lighting Designer

Staff for Columbia Artists Management LLC

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W. Seton Ijams, Vice President

Brandon E. Conley, Managerial Assistant

Jane L. Dechongkit, Managerial Assistant

Virsky Ukrainian National Dance Company

The renowned folk dance ensemble named after Pavlo Virsky is famous for its bright colors, the unity of content and form, and the vivid embodiment of its stage concept. This magnificent artistic group has embraced the beauty of its native Ukraine, the wisdom of its people, as well as the folk tradition of humor and optimism.

Each and every performance is a romantic, elevated, passionate, and exciting show. The ensemble's diverse concert programs presenting the exquisite charm of Ukrainian folk dancing and the wealth of its traditions have been warmly received by audiences all over the world. The history of the ensemble goes back to 1937, when Pavlo Virsky and Mykola Bolotov, well-known Ukrainian ballet-masters, brought together a group of folk dancers.

From 1955 to 1975, Pavlo Virsky headed the ensemble, and his outstanding talent was magnificently implemented in the performances of the company. It was under his guidance that the ensemble matured into a highly professional dance company whose art has won the hearts of numerous reviewers and the general public around the world.

Proceeding from folk traditions, Pavlo Virsky created such artistic choreographic compositions as *We're from Ukraine*, *Sailors*, *The Dolls*, *We Remember*, *Zaporozhtsi*, and *Povzunets*. Full of soft humor are *The Steppe Wagoner's Delight* and *Under the Cherry Tree*, while *Girl from the Podillya Region* is soft and romantic and *The Weeping Willow* is even sad.

Myroslav Vantukh, Pavlo Virsky's disciple and a great expert in folk traditions and ethnography, has been in charge of the ensemble since 1980. His main objective and continuing creative quest is the careful preservation and development of folk choreographic art. First-class performance and expressiveness of the dancers, exquisite moves, the bright palette of costumes, the wealth of tunes, and completeness of the choreographic plot are among the characteristic features of the new numbers such as *The Carpathians*, *The Tambourine Dance*, *The Young Years*, *In Peace and Harmony*, and *The Russian Suite*, which have entered the ensemble's repertoire.

In 1962, Pavlo Virsky created a children's two-year choreographic studio. In 1992, this was turned into a choreographic school for children by Myroslav Vantukh, and later it became a source of talented young performers for the ensemble.

The ensemble has toured many different lands quite far from its native Ukraine. Among the viewers who have welcomed this leading dance company have been people of Austria, England, Argentina, Bulgaria, Brazil, Belgium, Venezuela, Greece, Ecuador, Italy, India, Spain, Canada, Colombia, China, Cuba, Korea, Mexico, Mongolia, Germany, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Slovak Republic, the United States, Hungary, France, the Czech Republic, Chile, and Switzerland.

The foreign press has been unanimous about the high artistic and professional qualities of the company. It may seem that the peak of accomplishment and professionalism has been reached, but the Virsky Ukrainian National Dance Company under the direction of Myroslav Vantukh is

creating new dances full of surprises and delight and is thus letting people of the world learn more about the wonderful land of Ukraine.

PROFILES

Myroslav Vantukh (Artistic Director) became the artistic director of the Virsky Ukrainian National Dance Company in 1980. A disciple of Pavlo Virsky, he considers himself to be a choreographic ethnographer and is a recognized expert on Ukrainian folk culture. His primary aim is the careful preservation and development of folk dancing as choreographic art. In this spirit, he has created *The Carpathians*, *Tambourine Dance*, *The Young Years*, *In Peace and Harmony*, and the *Russian Suite*, all of which are part of the company's repertoire. In 1962, Pavlo Virsky founded a two-year choreographic training course, which Myroslav Vantukh was able to consolidate as a choreographic school for children in 1992 as the Ballet School of the Ukrainian National Dance Company.

Pavlo Virsky (Founder) made his first efforts at founding a folk dance company in 1937, and they were rewarded in 1940 when his group was recognized as Ukraine's Song and Dance Company and that today carries his name. Virsky was trained as a ballet dancer and performed as a soloist with a number of theatres in the old Soviet Union, where he also staged classical ballets such as Marius Petipa's *Swan Lake*, *Don Quixote*, and *Raymonda*. Like his colleague Mykola Bolotov, however, he was fascinated by folk dancing, which he believed portrayed a people's culture and soul. During World War II, his company performed for the soldiers at the front, and the group was accorded further recognition in connection with the Decade of Ukrainian Art and Literature in Moscow in 1951. As a choreographer, Virsky created a number

of the dances that the company still performs, including *Povzunets*, *Khmil*, *Under the Cherry Tree*, *Zaporozhtsi*, *The Needle Women*, *Sailors*, and *Hopak* and was awarded a number of honors prior to his death in 1975.

Ukraine

As an independent state, Ukraine first appeared on the world map in 1991, but its history dates back to the ninth century, when one of the largest and most powerful states of medieval Europe was founded under the name Kyivska Rus.

Ukraine is situated in eastern Europe. With an area of 603,700 kilometers, it is the second largest country on the continent. With 51 million inhabitants, it is sixth in population, with 73 percent Ukrainians and 22 percent ethnic Russians.

The country borders on Russia, Belarus, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, and the Black Sea. It is characterized as an agricultural nation because of its flat, fertile plains, but 15 percent of the land is covered by forest, and toward the west are the Carpathian Mountains.