



Virsky Ukrainian National Dance Company

Official Tour of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts of Ukraine

Sunday, September 19, 2004, 3 pm
Zellerbach Hall

Myroslav Vantukh
General and Artistic Director
Arts Manager
National Artist of Ukraine
Winner of State T. Shevchenko Premium

Columbia Artists Management LLC, New York City
Andrew S. Grossman, *producer*
W. Seton Ijams and Robert F. Berretta, *associates*

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the City of Berkeley's Civic Arts Program, Macy's West, and the McKesson Foundation
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The Wallace Foundation, and the Zellerbach Family Foundation for their generous support.*

Ukraino, My Ukraino! (Ukraine, My Ukraine!)
(Choreographic Composition)

Staging by Myroslav Vantukh, National Artist of Ukraine
 Music by Oleksandr Ponomar'ov, Honored Artist of Ukraine; Oleksandr Popov, *artist*
 Performed by the Company

Povzunets (Crawler)
(Cossack Comic Dance)

Staging by Pavlo Virsky, National Artist of the USSR
 Music by Abram Khelemsky
 Performed by a group of male soloists of the Company

Tsygansky (Gypsy Dance)

Staging by Myroslav Vantukh, National Artist of Ukraine
 Music by Georgiy Zavorodnii, National Artist of Ukraine

The Volynsk Patterns

Staging by Myroslav Vantukh, National Artist of Ukraine
 Music by Oleksandr Ponomar'ov, Honored Artist of Ukraine
 Performed by the Galyna Vantukh, National Artist of Ukraine;
 Andriy Demeschuk and Tatiana Lashenko, *artists*

Tambourine Dance

Staging by Myroslav Vantukh, National Artist of Ukraine
 Music by Georgiy Zavorodnii
 Performed by male dancers of the Company

Vyshyvalnytsi (Embroideresses)

Staging by Pavlo Virsky, National Artist of the USSR
 Music by Igor Ivashenko, National Artist of Ukraine
 Performed by female dancers of the Company
 Soloists: Viktoriia Shumilova, Honored Artist of Ukraine;
 Natalia Lumasheva; Svitlana Kiriliuk

Zaporozchi

(National Ukrainian Dance of Cossacks)

Staging by Pavlo Virsky, National Artist of the USSR
 Music by Iakov Lapinskii
 Performed by male dancers of the Company
 Soloists: Igor Kiriliuk, Honored Artist of Ukraine;
 Andriy Sheludko and Pavlo Rabokon, *artists*

INTERMISSION

Carpathians
(Choreographic Suite)

Staging by Myroslav Vantukh, National Artist of Ukraine
 Performed by the Company

The Years of Youth

Staging by Myroslav Vantukh, National Artist of Ukraine
 Music by Georgiy Zavorodnii, National Artist of Ukraine
 Performed by female dancers of the Company

Bereznianka

Staging by Myroslav Vantukh, National Artist of Ukraine
 Music by Stepan Marton and Georgiy Zavorodnii

Moriaky (Sailors)

Staging by Pavlo Virsky, National Artist of the USSR
 Music by Iakov Lapinskii
 Performed by male dancers of the Company

Kozachok

Staging by Myroslav Vantukh, National Artist of Ukraine
 Music by Oleksandr Ponomar'ov, Honored Artist of Ukraine;
 Oleksandr Cheberko, Honored Artist of Ukraine

Oi, Pid Vishneiu (Oh, Under a Cherry Tree)

(Choreographic Picture from Old Ukrainian Puppet Show)

Staging by Pavlo Virsky, National Artist of the USSR
 Music by Igor Ivashenko, National Artist of Ukraine
 Performed by Galyna Vantukh, Honored Artist of Ukraine;
 Igor Kiriliuk, National Artist of Ukraine; and Oleksandr Ometsinskiy, *artist*

Hopak

(Ukrainian Folk Dance)

Staging by Pavlo Virsky, National Artist of the USSR
 Music by Boris Yarovynsky
 Performed by the Company and students of the State Choreographic School
 (Oleksandr Cheberko, Honored Artist of Ukraine, *dance leader*)

Ukraino, My Ukraino! (*Ukraine, My Ukraine!*)

In their tradition, bread and salt on an embroidered towel is a symbol of the sincerity and kindness of the Ukrainian people. Both a greeting and a picturesque tour of the country's diverse regions, this dance invites the audience to share in the experiences conveyed by folk dances of the Ukrainian culture. Each region of this beautiful country has its own local flavor, its own dialect through dance—in this dance, all these variations are united into a single work, just as with the various flowers in a garland.

Povzunets (Crawler)

One of the more popular and well-known Ukrainian dances, *Crawler* is a light-hearted jaunt that demonstrates the abilities of the performers, showcasing impressive tricks and an amazing, almost inexhaustible, technical mastery. The ingenuity and vivaciousness of the Zaporizhia Cossacks is highly prized by the Ukrainian people, and their song evokes a sense of audacity, courage, and abandon.

Tsygansky (Gypsy Dance)

This exciting piece is a ritual dance based upon the world of the Bessarabian Gypsies. At the Gypsy camp, first the men and then the women engage in playful competition, one group attempting to outshine the other in a friendly but lively dance. The music is gay and exuberant, full of the passion and excitement traditional in Gypsy celebrations. With its brightly colored costumes and exhilarating choreography, this work never fails to enchant and thrill the audience.

The Volynsk Patterns

Each region of Ukraine has its special dialect of dance, featuring different colors and traditions. This work tells us about the beauties, history, and traditions of Volin. The colorful costumes and original music give life to the choreography, creating a mood of uplifting happiness.

Tambourine Dance

Tambourines sound as their colorful bands are waved merrily about by the dancers, giving the

impression that they are sparkling. The fiery, effervescent dancing, the bright colors of the costumes, the boisterous cascading movements, and the elegant perfection of the dance—all of this is accompanied by a guileless sense of humor common among this diverse group of people.

Vyshyvalnytsi (Embroideresses)

Drawing from the Russian tradition of needlework, *Embroideresses*, a women's dance, portrays the deep and rich beauty of Russian women. In unflattering, commonplace clothing, the women quietly go about their business. This is ordinary, everyday work, but it is also the season of creation, and how many generations of Russian women and young ladies have bent over embroidery, over their looms, in this way? What incredible trceries were borne under their patient hands? What marvelous songs were composed during their work? Love, hope, faithfulness of the Russian woman—all of this is expressed in this dance.

Zaporozchi

(National Ukrainian Dance of Cossacks)

This dance mimics the warfare rituals of the Zaporizhia warrior-host of Bogdan Khmelnytskyi. The legendary Zaporizhia Cossacks, vigorous defenders of their country and heroes from Ukraine's ancient past, partake in a soldiers' game before the audience. Dressed 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.

Carpathians

Called by a *trembita* (a long wooden horn used by the locals of the Carpathian Mountains) after a demanding 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 depicts various regions of Carpathia—Gutsulshyna, Bukonya, Zaccarpattia—each having its own costumes, characters, rites, customs, songs, and dances. These dances reflect three different kinds of Russian folk songs: songs of the mountains, songs of the water, and songs of the sun. Taken as a whole, this

dance offers a bright and dynamic representation of the Carpathian people.

The Years of Youth

In traditional Ukrainian folk rituals, women dance in a circle and with a special wreath, telling fortunes about love—future marriages, confessions of love, and the like. Inspired by this custom, which echoes from ancient times, this dance sings the praises of folk traditions, and calls for their renaissance in today's world. The opening is depicted as a trembling sigh, with Destiny speaking the words “Come to me, my beloved Cossack.” According to Ukrainian lore, the cherished dream of youth can be summed up in these words: “Destiny, grant me a good family, in good time.” In the dance's final part, this cherished dream is fulfilled.

In *The Years of Youth*, quick character studies in the form of choreographed quartets allow for each performer to improvise and express his/her own personality on stage. In this way, each dancer discovers a childlike sense of enthusiasm, perhaps igniting within the hearts of the audience the desire to proclaim, “Oh, return to me, youth, if only for a moment!” The ritual, with the graceful soaring movements of the women and the brave leaps of the men, embraces the essence of the ceremony: dance.

Bereznianka

A delicate dance full of true trans-Carpathian beauty. The characteristic bobbing of the maidens' heads and their coquettish dalliance with their partners raise an immediate smile of recognition. Cheerful costumes, merry music, soft and warm lighting—all this contributes to a marvelous feeling of youth and freshness.

Moriaky (Sailors)

The vivacity and ingenuity of sailors can captivate us, and their dashing appearance on the stage can remind us of the fresh sea wind. This dance tells the story of Peter Pipeclay, the energetic and fickle beauty of the sea, and Peter's abiding love of it. The dance churns like the foam of the waves, unwinding like a

maelstrom that sprays showers all around. Then, a moment later, we share in a quiet chat on the ship's deck with the crew responding in unison to each cue. The men then erupt into a merry dance that evokes ideas of endurance and durability, both characteristic qualities of sailors. With great pride in their heritage, the men of the Black Sea Fleet hope one day for an independent Ukraine.

Kozachok

This dance has to do with Ukrainian history and traditions. It is spring in Ukraine, the world filled with colorful costumes, beautiful music, and lively dance. This is a work full of spins and jumps. It is a very happy dance, performed only by the women, and it celebrates the women's beauty.

Oi, Pid Vishneiu (Oh, Under a Cherry Tree)

The humorous Ukrainian song “Oh, Under a Cherry Tree” derides the advances of an old man on a young beauty. The girl, capricious and diffident, rejects the old man's gifts. Yet, he will not give her a moment's peace until a young man—also helplessly infatuated with the beautiful lady—enters the scene. The story is narrated through a very short, characteristically Russian dance, while throughout the performance, the audience will see an ancient Ukrainian puppet show that captures the essence of this particular work.

Hopak (Ukrainian Folk Dance)

No Ukrainian jamboree is complete without the “Hopping Dance.” Almost all of these dances are accompanied with a “hop” interjection, hence the name *Hopak*. The choreography features numerous solo performances, breathtaking tricks, and many splendid combinations. The women are adorned in national garb, complete with chaplets, necklaces, and eye-catching colorful bands. The excitement of the dancers is easily conveyed to the audience, as all become absorbed into the spirit of the dance. With its folk choreography, *Hopak*, the final dance of the program, is the quintessential Ukrainian dance.



Virsky Ukrainian National Dance Company, the renowned folk dance ensemble named after Pavlo Virsky, is famous for its effervescent productions, its unified content and form, and its vivid stagings. This magnificent group has embraced the beauty of its native Ukraine, the wisdom of its people, as well as a folk tradition filled with humor and optimism.

Each and every performance is romantic, elevated, passionate, and exciting. The ensemble's diverse concert programs present the exquisite charm of Ukrainian folk dancing and the wealth of its traditions, and 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, Virsky headed the ensemble, and it was under his guidance that the group matured into a highly professional dance company.

Myroslav Vantukh, Virsky's disciple and an 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 and the bright palette of costumes, the wealth of tunes and completeness of the choreographic plot—these are characteristic features of the new numbers that have entered the ensemble's repertoire.

The Company has toured many different lands far from its native Ukraine. Among the countries that have welcomed the ensemble have been Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Columbia, Cuba, the Czech Republic, Ecuador, England, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Italy, Korea, Mexico, Mongolia, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Slovak Republic, Spain, Switzerland, the United States of America, and Venezuela.

Myroslav Vantukh (*general and artistic director*) became artistic director of the Virsky Ukrainian National Dance Company in 1980. A disciple of Pavlo Virsky, he considers himself 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 *Carpathians*, *Tambourine Dance*,

The Years of Youth, *In Peace and Harmony*, and *Russian Suite*, all of which are part of the Company's repertory. In 1962, Pavlo Virsky founded a two-year choreographic training course, which Myroslav Vantukh consolidated as a choreographic school for children in 1992 (The Ballet School of the Ukrainian National Dance Company).

Pavlo Virsky's first efforts at founding a folk dance company came in 1937 and were rewarded in 1940, when his group was recognized as Ukraine's Song and Dance Company. Today it carries his name: Virsky Ukrainian National Dance Company. Virsky was trained as a ballet dancer and performed as a soloist with a number of theaters in the old Soviet Union, where he also staged classical ballets such as Petipa's *Swan Lake*, *Don Quixote*, and *Raymonda*. Like his colleague Mikola Bolotov, however, he was fascinated by folk dancing, which he believed to portray the people's culture and soul. During World War II, Virsky's 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 dances, including *Povzunets*; *Oi, Pid Vishneiu*; *Zaporozchi*; *Vyshyvahnytsi*; *Moriaky*; and *Hopak*. He 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 9th century AD, when one of the largest and most powerful states of medieval Europe was founded under the name of Kyivska Rus.

Ukraine is situated in Eastern Europe. With an area of 603,700 km, it is the second-largest country on the continent. With 51 million inhabitants, it is sixth in population. The population includes 73% Ukrainians and 22% ethnic Russians. The country borders on Russia, Belarus, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, and the Black Sea. It is characterized as an agricultural nation with flat, fertile plains. About 15% is covered by forest, with the Carpathian Mountains in the west.

VIRSKY UKRAINIAN NATIONAL DANCE COMPANY

Artistic Management

Myroslav Vantukh, *general director and artistic director* (National Artist of Ukraine, Winner of State T. Shevchenko Premium, Professor, Academician)
Yevhen Averianov, *ballet master* (National Artist of Ukraine)
Oleksandr Cheberko, *chief dance leader* (Honored Artist of Ukraine)

Administrative Management

Myroslav Vantukh, Jr., *vice general director*
Ivan Kostenko, *managing director* (Honored Worker of Culture, Ukraine)
Sergey Belkyn, *arts staging manager*
Valentyna Hanzia, *costumes*
Lyubov Illarionova, *costumes*
Valentyn Dorosii, *lighting design*

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Paul Bartlett, *company manager*
Michael J. Panvini, *production stage manager*