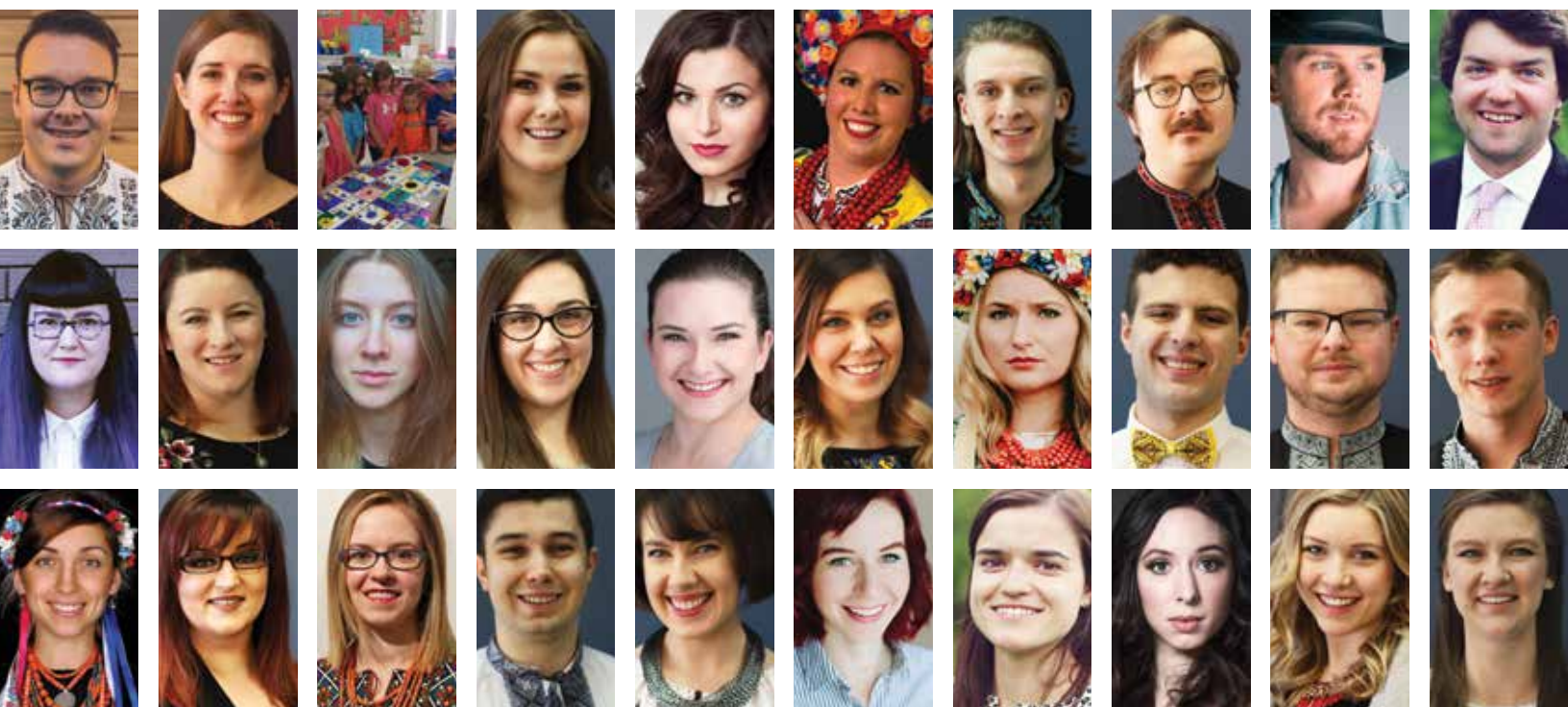


# ACUAVITAE

ALBERTA'S UKRAINIAN ARTS AND CULTURE MAGAZINE

Spring 2018 | Volume 24, Issue 1



## TOP 30 UNDER 30

### BLOOD OF OUR SOIL:

Presented by Pyretic Productions  
and St. John's Institute

### SOJOURNERS ABIDE:

125 Years of Ukrainian-Canadian  
Artistic Tradition and Inspiration

Edmonton Catholic Schools

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# ACUAVITAE



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Group photo by: Larysa Luciwi

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## THE UCAMA \$125 INITIATIVE

Commemorating the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ukrainian immigration to Canada  
1891-2016

The Ukrainian Canadian Archives and Museums of Alberta (UCAMA) is building a new museum, archives and library facility on Edmonton's Jasper Avenue. The resulting structure will be a preeminent museum in Western Canada. UCAMA's current fund raising effort is tied to the 125th anniversary of Ukrainian immigration to Canada in 2016.

If each of the 300,000+ persons of Ukrainian origin in Alberta were to give just one dollar for each year of the 125 years since Ukrainians first immigrated to Canada, UCAMA could raise \$37,500,000, enough to complete both phases of the museum construction and establish an endowment to operate the facility.

UCAMA is not asking for your sweat and blood; only a little money. Surely our collective heritage and pride is worth \$125 per person. Each donor will be recognized in a special memorial volume housed in the new facility. And the first 1,000 donors will also have their names placed on a brick in the new museum.

We have already come such a long way. The end is in sight.

Support UCAMA for this important anniversary! Become a part of the legacy!

**UCAMA is a registered charitable organization, go to [www.ucama.com/donate](http://www.ucama.com/donate) to donate to this important cause!**



# SHOSTAK SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT: Adrian Warchola

by Nancy Lyzaniwski

**T**he Alberta Council for the Ukrainian Arts is pleased to award Adrian Warchola the 2017 Peter and Geraldine Shostak Scholarship for Emerging Musicians. Adrian is an accomplished pianist, vocalist, saxophonist, band member and band leader.

In 2007, he co-founded the band Euphoria with Steven Gowda to share their love of Ukrainian music with others. Band members over the years have included musicians from MacEwan University music studies, scouts members, dedicated parents, and others. The band has performed at numerous functions and weddings, including donating their time in order to foster an appreciation of Ukrainian Canadian live music and a spirit of community with musical and non-musical organizations.

Under Adrian's leadership, the band will mark its 10th anniversary with a **10 YEARS OF EUPHORIA** project which comprises recording and producing a debut album of traditional, contemporary, and original works collaborating with former band members and local Ukrainian ensembles. We look forward to the public release and launch of the CD in Edmonton as well as the band's plans to distribute the CD and share it with dance schools,

Alberta Ukrainian Dance Association as well as other organizations, and Ukrainian events and festivals across Canada. Current band members include: Steven Gowda, Marissa Karpiak, Fred Mack, Brett Hansen and Adrian Warchola.


Adrian has been an active member of the Ukrainian community in Canada having held leadership roles with the University of Alberta Ukrainian Students' Society, the SUSK National Ukrainian Canadian Students Union and currently volunteers his time on the Ukrainian Community Council for Servus Credit Union and leads the marketing work for the upcoming UFest Edmonton Ukrainian Festival in May, 2018. He is a recipient of the Premier's Citizenship Award, the Hetman Award from the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC) Alberta Provincial Council, and the UCC Youth Leadership Award. 



PHOTO: PROVIDED

Through the generosity of Peter and Geraldine Shostak, the Shostak Award was established in 2015 to support emerging Alberta musicians and visual artists in developing their careers. Eligibility criteria are available at [www.acuarts.ca](http://www.acuarts.ca). The deadline for applications is June 30, 2018.







PHOTOS BY: ROBYN McHUGH AND DOMINIKA KOZIAK

# Sojourners Abide

125 YEARS OF UKRAINIAN-CANADIAN  
ARTISTIC TRADITION AND INSPIRATION

*By Lyrissa Sheptak*

It has been said that the purpose of art is to wash the dust of daily life off of our souls<sup>1</sup>. Thinking back to our Ukrainian predecessors -- especially those who had the courage to leave their homeland and create a new life in foreign one -- this quote is especially true.



125 years ago when the first Ukrainian immigrants arrived in Canada, life was arduous and exhausting; survival was no guarantee. The ‘dust of daily life’ was often literally dust from toiling in gardens and fields. But ‘dust’ also clung to immigrants in the form of the desperation to survive, discrimination, and loneliness. Yet with odds stacked against them, as they came home after an exhausting day’s work with barely enough energy to nourish themselves and then collapse on their beds, their cultural identity didn’t fade away with the exertion and drudgery of their lives. Instead, oftentimes by the soft glow of a candle in the stillness of the night, their dust gave way to the glow of artistic creation.

Perhaps it was their way to pay homage to the life they once had, or perpetuate their culture in a new land. But perhaps, like the more sophisticated artists of today, creating art was their way to express themselves

or give meaning to their life – after all, they were now free to do so. Whatever the reasons, if it wasn’t for the first immigrants’ resolutions to preserve and celebrate their culture, the Ukrainian Canadian community wouldn’t be flourishing to the degree it is today. Their struggles became the impetus for the following generations’ achievements in Canadian society. With passion, prodding, and instruction each generation of Ukrainian Canadians dared the next to dream bigger and work smarter. As we look upon the work of various visual artists through the last five waves of immigration (or art inspired during the last 125 years) we can clearly see that each generation has not only answered the dare, but rose to the occasion.

But ACUA has always known this. It’s why it was created in the first place. With a deep passion for their culture, Albert Council for the Ukrainian Arts was established to support and promote

Ukrainian artists and their art within the Ukrainian Albertan community, as well as bridge the gap to the non-Ukrainian community. This “bridging” was done specifically well this past spring of 2017 with the art exhibit *Five Waves of Immigration* done in collaboration with the Art Gallery of Alberta (AGA). This show was the first of its kind in Ukrainian Albertan history where Ukrainian visual artists achieved their dreams of showcasing their art to mainstream Canada. But in order to bring it to the big stage someone had to dream to do it in the first place, and that person was ACUA president Deborah Stasiuk.

A firm advocator that Ukrainian Canadian artists deserve to be recognized alongside all other Canadian artists, Stasiuk felt that the 125th anniversary celebrating Ukrainian settlement in Canada was the perfect opportunity to organize such an undertaking. With the help of dedicated committee





PHOTO: MARCO LEVYTSKY

members, ACUA secured funding for the project, and began planning.

Renowned Ukrainian Canadian artist, Larisa Sembaliuk Cheladyn, accepted the task to be the exhibit curator and immediately set ACUA's vision into motion. By surrounding herself with a committed team who was just as passionate about the project as she, Cheladyn worked closely with the AGA to create an exhibit that would both 'WOW' and educate exhibit visitors. Cheladyn, with AGA collaborators

bridged the gap between each of their artistic communities.

Cheladyn had another challenge as well. With such a rich bounty of artists and art from which to choose, how could she possibly limit the pieces used for the exhibit? She wished she could include them all. But due to space limitations at the AGA she and committee members chose pieces that would fit a narrative "that reflected a 125-year-old immigration story."<sup>2</sup> The exhibit was intended to be a lesson in history and the evolution of fine art in the Ukrainian Albertan community demonstrated through portraits of Eleniak and Pylypow (symbolic of our past) to the last two works of the exhibit created by the Warring sisters (our future). In between were "visual statements and reminders that walked us through time." Simultaneously, the pieces also spoke to "artistic ingenuity

and resourcefulness" as Cheladyn ensured to include pieces of various mediums like oil paintings, watercolors, acrylics, mosaics, wood carving, and embroidery.<sup>3</sup> As well, she made a conscious effort to pay homage to artists who have "gone on to mentor and inspire others" for their expertise and dedication are invaluable to not only the individual artist, but the cultural community as well. ACUA's intention was not only to celebrate the art and history, but also to pay homage to the people who created it and what compelled them to do it.

Stasiuk wanted the "Five Waves of Inspiration" exhibit to be a deeply spiritual,

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*Stasiuk wanted the "Five Waves of Inspiration" exhibit to be a deeply spiritual, cultural, and passionate awakening and journey for all those who were touched by it."*

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Meaghan Froh and Manon Gaude, fulfilled several roles from selecting and hanging artistic pieces, to digitizing, contextualizing, and public outreach. By integrating each other's expertise, their teamwork successfully





cultural, and passionate awakening and journey for all those who were touched by it.” As well, she hoped it would be a way to “stay connected -- or reconnect -- with yourself and revisit where you came from.” And on the exhibit’s opening night Stasiuk’s wishes came true. Many people from Alberta’s Ukrainian community gathered together for the opening ceremonies -- presided over by Master of Ceremonies Orest Soltykevych -- which included: speeches from members of ACUA and the arts and political community at large, special thanks and acknowledgments of all the people who were involved in bringing the inaugural project to fruition, and a live musical performance by Adrian Warchola, Katrusia Pohoreski, and Brett Hansen which coincided with a film montage presenting the history of Ukrainian music in Alberta throughout the past 125 years. After the conclusion of the opening ceremonies, everyone took time perusing and viewing the exhibit, finally celebrating the long-anticipated finished product. It was a successful evening, full of discussion, education, passion and comradery.

The exhibit ran in Edmonton from May 4th to the 30th, where during that time various featured artists led workshops, brown bag lunches, a film festival, and several other events that the community was invited to participate in. After the Edmonton dates were completed, Five Waves of Inspiration was exhibited in Calgary from July 3rd to the 27th, in collaboration with the Calgary Public Library. During that time ACUA hosted a Curator’s Reception and a Curator’s Tour. More than 10,000 people viewed the exhibit for it coincided with the Calgary Stampede and Calgary’s special Canada Day 150 celebration. Five Waves of Inspiration was a great success in both cities.

After having some time to reflect, the members of ACUA wish to thank everyone who gave of their time to plan the project, as well as support the exhibit by attending it. Special acknowledgements go to Larisa Sembaliuk Cheladyn, Ptashka Arts, Robin McHugh, Dominika Koziak, Lyrissa Sheptak, the planning committee, the AGA, the Calgary Library, Canadian

Heritage, Edmonton Historical Society, the featured artists, and all of the 15,000 people who visited the exhibit in Edmonton and Calgary.

With such an immense and successful project the question begs to be asked, where does ACUA go from here? Remaining committed to its community of supporters through its own gallery, the artists and artisans they endorse, and the workshops and artist series they feature regularly, ACUA continues to dream big. After all, if there is anything that planning the *5 Waves of Inspiration* exhibit demonstrated it’s that the surface has only been scratched -- there are many more artists in the Ukrainian community to showcase on a grander scale. Now that this exhibition has broken ground, it opens doors to other such projects. “The world needs dreamers, and the world needs doers. But above all,

the world needs dreamers who do,”<sup>4</sup> and this, it seems, is one of our lasting legacies. Through cooperation, commitment, and vision, our Ukrainian Canadian community continues to find ways to flourish amidst the dust of our own daily lives and celebrate one another, as a culture, within the greater Canadian context. **AV**

<sup>1</sup> V. Pinchuk

<sup>2</sup> Quote of Larisa Sembaliuk Cheladyn taken the curator’s note from *Five Waves of Inspiration* catalogue. 2017.

<sup>3</sup> *Five Waves*, page. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Quote by Sara Ban Breathnach



Щиро вітаємо  
Альбертську Раду Українського  
Мистецтва із 30-річчям!



# BLOOD OF OUR SOIL

*Presented by Pyretic Productions and St. John's Institute*



by Lianna Makuch


**A**fter generations of conflict, a new crisis opens old wounds. “How can our land not but be fertile when so much blood has seeped into it?”

*Blood of Our Soil* written by Lianna Makuch is a unique creative production presented through the imagination of a Ukrainian Canadian woman, depicting the struggles of the Ukrainian people against the atrocities of Stalin, to the horrors of Hitler, while drawing disturbing parallels to the current Putin regime.

A poignant and emotional performance experience, *Blood of Our Soil* integrates dramatic storytelling, live Ukrainian folk music, a fusion of Ukrainian and contemporary dance, and a projection design that paints a landscape of both beauty and terror.

*Blood of Our Soil* reveals the personal stories of those at the heart of political turmoil: spanning generations from

WWII to Europe's forgotten conflict in contemporary Eastern Ukraine. This innovative production is inspired by the true historic journal entries documenting the playwright's Ukrainian grandparents' emigration to Canada after the 2nd World War, as well as a recent trip to the conflict zone in Ukraine. The playwright visited her grandparents' ancestral villages, as well as conducted extensive research in Eastern Ukraine, where current Russian aggression has sparked a war that has killed more than 10,000 people, and displaced millions.

In March 2018, Pyretic Productions and St. John's Institute will present the world premiere of *Blood of Our Soil*, along with several community engagement events including talk backs, a panel discussion, school matinee performances, two community receptions, and an emotionally evocative lobby installation. The piece will take place March 1 – 9, 2018 in the Westbury Theatre at Edmonton's Fringe Theatre Adventures. 

For more information go to  
[www.pyreticproductions.ca](http://www.pyreticproductions.ca).



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## HISTORY ALIVE!

### 2018 Feature Exhibit: **Peter Shostak**

This summer, we are pleased to present the works of celebrated Ukrainian-Canadian artist Peter Shostak in our Visitor Centre. Throughout his career Peter Shostak has painted to remember the stories and experiences of the early Ukrainian settlers across the Prairies.

Featuring a unique collection of works including two pieces being exhibited for the first time, visitors will be able to explore the stories and memories captured by the paintings.

### 2018 Special Events

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| May 21      | Celebration of Spring                               |
| June 24     | Vintage Day and the Friends<br>Ukrainian Music Fest |
| August 19   | Ukrainian Day                                       |
| September 9 | Harvest of the Past                                 |



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Alberta

### UKRAINIAN CHILDREN'S STUDIO THEATRE

# Dzherelo

*By Christina Ostashevsky*

The Edmonton Ukrainian Community came together on December 16, 2017 at the Ukrainian National Federation Hall to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Ukrainian Children's Studio Theatre *Dzherelo*. Originally established by a group of Ukrainian mothers from Poland—Alexandra Cybulsky, Stefania Pik, Irena Prystasz and Slava Yopyk, and the Ukrainian Women's Organization member Olga Yaremko, it was a Ukrainian language-learning meeting place for their own children. It has since developed into a fully fledged children's drama group. *Dzherelo* means 'water spring', a name given by Iryna Zavadzka, a former actress from the renowned Maria Zankovetska Theatre in Lviv, Ukraine, and the theatre's first artistic director. Olga Myc took over from Ms. Zavadzka for ten years from 1994-2004, to be followed by Alla Semenko, current artistic director of thirteen years.

Run by the Edmonton Society of the Ukrainian Women's Organization of Canada (UWO-OYK), *Dzherelo* holds an

important place in the life of its members, some as young as five years old. Every Friday evening the children get together to sing, to a wonderful accompaniment by music instructor Dmytro Rusnak, recite poems and learn lines for the upcoming plays. Artistic director Alla Semenko says that although the amateur theatre exposes children to Ukrainian literary, musical and cultural traditions, it also develops the little artists' team spirit and creates a sense of accomplishment. In her thirteen years in this role, Ms. Semenko has seen some timid children develop into great public speakers and community leaders. For this reason, instructors Khrystyna Pikh and Olga Fediv make sure that every child out of twenty-six current *Dzherelo* members has a speaking role in each production. Newly arrived immigrant children often find their first Ukrainian-speaking friends at *Dzherelo* and an extra-curricular activities that their parents can actually afford, thanks to the generous sponsorship by the UWO-OYK.

The highlight of the year for all little Ukrainians is a visit by St. Nicholas, a



Ukrainian equivalent to Santa. This year's anniversary production was held in conjunction with St. Nicholas celebration, which saw a very generous and patient St. Nicholas give out gifts to all the children, artists and audience members alike. The opening act of the 25th anniversary celebration was the Ukrainian female-only folk singers ensemble *Ruta*, comprised of *Dzherelo* alumni and current high-school and university students. Their beautiful singing helped beat the pre-show jitters of the little artists performing *Once Upon a Dog*, a well-known Ukrainian folktale that found international acclaim as an award-winning 1982 animated film. The plot centers on an old incapable guard dog who is banned from home and ends up in a forest, face-to-face with his old enemy, the wolf.

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR ALLA SEMENKO SAYS THAT ALTHOUGH THE AMATEUR THEATRE EXPOSES CHILDREN TO UKRAINIAN LITERARY, MUSICAL AND CULTURAL TRADITIONS, IT ALSO DEVELOPS THE LITTLE ARTISTS' TEAM SPIRIT AND CREATES A SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT.

The two are able to put aside their differences and stage a baby kidnapping that guarantees the dog's return back to his family, hailed as a hero. The wolf's reward is a place at the lavish Ukrainian wedding table (or rather under it, to not scare off the guests). The play highlighted the value of true friendship and the importance of collaboration in face of obstacles. After their well-deserved Christmas break, *Dzherelo* artists and instructors will be back doing just that—fostering their friendships while collaborating on another theatre production. 📺



ALL PHOTOS BY: ROMAN PETRIV



PHOTO BY LARYSA LUCIW

# TOP 30 UNDER 30

**I**n 2017 ACUA celebrated its 30th anniversary and to mark this milestone the **Top 30 Under 30** Award was established. Over the past 30 years ACUA has promoted artists of Ukrainian Heritage and celebrated Ukrainian art and culture. ACUA now looks forward to building on the past 30 years and is excited about the next 30 years. **Top 30 Under 30** launches ACUA and the Ukrainian arts community into the future, led by the next generation of talented individuals whose passion for the arts and Ukrainian culture is commendable.

The **Top 30 Under 30** celebrates and recognizes 30 outstanding emerging artists in the Alberta Ukrainian community. The emerging artists being recognized in this program have made significant contributions to the arts.

ACUA would also like to congratulate all the **Top 30 Under 30** recipients on their nominations. ACUA would like to send our gratitude to everyone who submitted nominations and have assisted with this project.

These emerging artists will be recognized at the Top 30 Under 30 awards banquet on February 24, 2018.

To read the individuals complete interview, got to [www.acuarts.ca](http://www.acuarts.ca)



## DESCRIBE YOUR CREATIVE WORK. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU TO BE ABLE TO PURSUE YOUR CREATIVE ARTS?

### *Adrian Warchola*

I am a musician and vocalist. Currently, I play the piano and sing, but have also studied the alto saxophone. I co-founded the Ukrainian-Canadian dance band Euphoria together with my friend Steven Gowda, and have been leading the band into what is now our 10th anniversary year. I am the band's lead singer, keyboard player, and manager. We are currently embarking on our 10 YEARS - 10 POKIB Project - to record our debut all-Ukrainian album to be released in 2018.

### *Adriana Lebedovich*

I am a proud member of the second violin section of the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, a position I have held since September, 2007. I still hold the record for being the youngest person to have won a job in the orchestra, by three days! The opportunity to make music for a living is a dream come true.

### *Alicia Shusarchuk*

Currently, I play the tsymbaly (dulcimer) and dance with Vohon Ukrainian Dance Ensemble. Previously, I also sang with numerous Ukrainian choirs. To be able to share traditions and heritage of the Ukrainian culture with the larger society, means the world to me. Thirty years from now my children may get the opportunity to hear someone playing the tsymbaly because I did my part in trying to keep this tradition alive.

### *Ana Toumine*

I am an opera singer, which means I am a story teller. I express emotions with my voice, using my own body to amplify and resonate through a hall to reach as many people as possible. Opera combines every form of art in a grand spectacle on stage, telling a story through music, often concerning the human condition.

I have only just begun my journey, but any chance I get to perform is just such a gift. I think people in North America look at this path as if it's such a rare and glamorous thing. In reality, at its bare bones, it's just like any other career starting from the ground up - networking, marketing, gaining experience, and being heard. It means a lot to pursue my passion and share it with others, and I couldn't imagine expending my energy in any other way.

### *Benjamin Christiani*

I am the fiddle player for The Diamonds Band in Edmonton. We play for club dances, folk festivals, and private events in and around Edmonton. Although we play multiple genres of music from Eastern

Canadian, Irish, Bluegrass, and Old Time Fiddle, our audiences always get going the most whenever we play Ukrainian music. Growing up as a sixth generation Ukrainian-Canadian, I listened to many of the classic dance orchestras from my Dido's record collection and have been influenced by many of those relics. The music community that I am pleased to be a part of has always been welcoming of young individuals and has fostered and developed new growth in this fading art.

### *Borys Tarasenko*

I'm a multidisciplinary artist based out of Edmonton. My main thing is painting, but I also like drawing, graphic design, video, and I've been involved in a number of public art projects around Edmonton.

### *Brett Kissel*

I am a JUNO and Multiple CCMA Award Winner. The Canadian Press named me the "New King of Country Music," with back to back wins for Male Artist of the Year. I am one of only a select group of Canadians to ever perform on the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville and am the only Canadian to ever tour with country mega-star, Garth Brooks. I grew up on a family cattle farm in north eastern Alberta, but now reside in Nashville, Tennessee. It is extremely special that I get to make a living, travel the world, and reach people through music.

### *Cassian Soltykevych*

Photography, videography, and graphic design are my creative work. My creative bent has always mixed with the business side of me wherever I go. This means I'm able to show people what I believe is an effective and inspiring way to convey a message - be it a video of



TAMARA SOLTYKEVYCH | PHOTO PROVIDED

## ON THE COVER

a dance group, a corporate headshot, or a poster for a community event. I love that I can visually show something professional (business side) with my interpretation on how it would best look (creative side).

### *Dominika Koziak*

My art focuses on a relationship between contemporary and ancestral culture. My paintings revolve around the classical Byzantine method and style of art. Ancestral techniques are a key role in my work in order to produce a pure and academic method outside of its artistic canon. For me, returning to historical methods and motifs from thousands of years ago is a thrilling pursuit and addition to my art practice.

### *Emily Belke*

I am a dancer, a dance teacher, drama teacher and theatre producer. It means the world to me to be able to pursue and teach my passion to the next generation. The arts allow people to express themselves in a manner that others can not only appreciate but also connect emotionally with.

### *Ileanna Cheladyn*

I'm a dance artist with interests informed by my studies and research in sociology and anthropology. Working with my body, and with the embodiment of others, my work and my practice explore functionality, expressiveness, presence, and physicality, all within a context of ethical standards and non-neoliberal relationships.

### *Joyanne Rudiak*

I work in a multitude of creative areas, including theatre, music, and writing. Within theatre, I focus mostly on musical theatre as an actor, teacher, and voice coach, though my degree actually had more to do with pure theatre. I have performed with the Edmonton Opera, my former Ukrainian trio, Zavtra, and on the streets of Dublin, Ottawa, and Edmonton. Currently, I sing with my long-time friend and colleague, Christina Csernyanski, and you can find us performing at various functions around Edmonton, including at the Byzantine Winter Festival on Alberta Avenue. We also cantor for the Ukrainian Catholic Church.



MURRAY STEELE | PHOTO BY: LARYSA LUCIW



ADRIANA LEBEDOVICH | PHOTO BY: LARYSA LUCIW

### *Kasia Brytan*

I am a Stage Manager for theatre in Edmonton, and have worked on shows like Sweeney Todd, William Shakespeare's Henry V, various dance productions across the province, and SVIATO 25: A Celebration of the Anniversary of Ukraine's Declaration of Independence, which took place in Churchill Square in 2016. Knowing that I can make a difference and use my skills to make these shows and important events run smoothly is why I love it.

I'm also an actor in local film, and have been a Casting Director in the past. I am currently in editing for a short film I wrote and produced which is very close to my heart. This film is called, *Condolences*.

I am also a company member of the Cheremosh Ukrainian Dance Company, and I can't imagine my life without it!

### *Larissa Pohoreski*

I work as a visual artist, theatre artist (playwright, producer, music director, actor, dancer/performer, designer), musician, vocalist, the list goes on! I am interested in creating works that merge Ukrainian folk influences with contemporary aesthetics.

### *Lianna Makuch*

I'm an Ukrainian Canadian theatre artist, and graduate of the University of Alberta's Bachelor of Fine Arts Acting Program. Since graduating, I have enjoyed a diverse career, as an actor, director, instructor, and artistic producer. I have managed audience outreach and communications for several Edmonton arts festivals. I have the privilege of building the independent theatre company, Pyretic Productions, as an Artistic Associate & Producer from the ground up with two other artistic partners. Throughout the past four years, we have presented a new original play every season, many of which have received nominations and awards from Edmonton's premiere theatre awards ceremony, the Elizabeth Sterling Haynes awards.

### *Michael V. Sulyma*

Being able to pursue Ukrainian dance and theatre in general, means everything to me; it is a main part of my identity and I am so proud of it. During my time in high school, where I expanded my technical training for the performing arts in musical theatre, contemporary dance, modern dance and many other styles, I was always identified as "the Ukrainian dancer." I believe that Ukrainian dance is a



foundation for who I am as a person. My development in other areas of performing arts has enhanced that foundation of Ukrainian dance.

## *Michael Wowk*

I have been Ukrainian dancing almost my entire life, starting in the youngest group at the Verkhovyna Dance School. Once I turned 16 years old I became a member of the semi-professional adult group Dunai under the Verkhovyna Ensemble. In the last two years I have joined the Verkhovyna Choir. I was never a particularly good singer, but the love of Ukrainian folk music drove me towards joining. Since then I have improved my singing skills immensely and am very glad I joined when I did.

## *Murray Steele*

I currently dance for the Ukrainian Shumka Dancers. I also am an instructor at the Ardrossan Yatran Ukrainian Dance School. With these opportunities I am able to pass on my passion and knowledge for Ukrainian dance to my students, audience members, and other dancers within Shumka. This gives me great pride and satisfaction knowing that I have the potential to positively influence others through something I love.

## *Myroslava Oksentiuk*

I have been involved with Ukrainian Folk Arts and culture for a long time. Currently, I teach workshops in traditional Motanky Dolls, Vytananky Paper Cutting, Petrekivskyi Painting and other authentic crafts.

## *Namisha Hlus*

I dabble in a few different art forms but singing is the most important to me and the one I enjoy the most. It means the world to me that I have been given a gift from God that I am able to share with others. Even though I do not pursue it full-time, I use my gift whenever I get the chance.

## *Olesia Markevych*

I have been in Ukrainian dance since age 10. I have been a member of the Volya Ukrainian Dance Ensemble since 2004. Dance is something that has allowed me to share my love for Ukrainian culture. Being able to dance gives me a physical and emotional release. Having the opportunity to be part of Alberta's especially vibrant Ukrainian dance community is something very unique and special. I feel so lucky to be a part of it, as even this depth and diversity of the Ukrainian dance community does not exist anywhere else in the world.

I have been a member of the Plast Ukrainian Youth Association for as long as I can remember. Through them I have learned literally hundreds of Ukrainian folk songs as well as many other aspects of Ukrainian history and culture.

## *Rebecca Kassian (Posthumous Award)*

Becky was a Ukrainian Dancer, starting at the age of four with the Thorhild Ukrainian Dancing Club until the age of 18, for a total of 14 years, and she volunteered teaching the younger groups with this club for five years. Becky also danced an Alumni duet in 2013 for the club's 40th anniversary and taught the adult group in Thorhild, where her mother was a participant. Becky danced briefly with the Volya Ukrainian Dance Ensemble in 2010-2011 before finding her home with the Vohon Ukrainian Dance Ensemble where she danced from 2011 until her passing.

After becoming involved with Vohon, Becky embraced this ensemble with her whole heart getting immediately involved with the Society Board as a director at large and most recently treasurer for four years and living her dream of dancing and travelling around the world to share that love of dance.

## *Stephan Bociurkiw*

I have been involved in Ukrainian dance for most of my life, I am currently in my 14th season in the Cheremosh Ukrainian Dance Company. I am proud to have the ability to be a cultural ambassador by preserving and showcasing my culture through art.

## *Stephania Romaniuk*

I am a singer, music educator, and writer. I sing in the classical, Bel Canto tradition, with frequent ventures into Ukrainian popular



MYROSLAVA OKSENTIUK | PHOTO PROVIDED



ADRIAN WARCHOLA | PHOTO BY: LARYSA LUCIW

## ON THE COVER



REBECCA KASSIAN | PHOTO PROVIDED

styles. I teach voice and musicianship, am a Resident Artist with the Calgary Board of Education, and have taught music for Ukrainian organizations and at summer camps. I was artistic director for large-scale musical-theatrical concerts in the Ukrainian community. I also work as a freelance copywriter for arts organizations including the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra.

### *Stephanie Bahniuk*

I am a set, lighting and costume designer for theatre. I have worked on a variety of productions from independent theatre to musicals to commercial theatre. I often design all three elements for one show or just one of the elements. I am currently working towards my MFA in Theatre Design (Costume Design Major) at Yale School of Drama. Everyday, I am being challenged in new and different ways. With every project, I get to work with new collaborators who all bring creative energy and ideas and I get to research new time periods or historical backgrounds or pop culture. It also means that I get to share my own ideas with the public and contribute to a collective collaboration.

### *Tamara Soltykevych*

I am a writer. I write mostly fiction but recently have been trying out some more creative non-fiction pieces. Because I work in a technical

role all day - I am a civil engineer by day - I feel it's very important to exercise the other part of my brain. To be able to have a creative outlet is rewarding and helps me feel balanced.

### *Tanya Chumak*

I work as a professional ballet dancer with Alberta Ballet. I rehearse and perform in various productions throughout the year. It is incredibly meaningful for me to be able to pursue my art as a career, but it can also be very challenging to achieve success and to dance at a professional level. I am grateful for the success that I've had and for my years of hard work paying off. It has always been my dream to dance with Alberta Ballet since I was very young. Achieving that goal and continuing to overcome challenges and milestones have made me the artist I am today. To be able to pursue my passion and be successful as a ballerina has been a dream come true.

### *Tanya Pacholok*

I feel very fortunate to be able to pursue creative works as a young, Ukrainian woman involved in a range of theatre, drama, dance and music. It is incredibly meaningful for me as an artistic outlet, as a means to engage in conversation, spark social change and express my identity. I have been involved in a variety of socially relevant theatre projects from an Anti-Bullying tour around Calgary/Edmonton, the workshop production of "Blood of Our Soil" about the political turmoil in Ukraine, Canada the Musical in Banff, Alberta, and the Indra Congress in Northern Ireland.

### *Tatiana Cheladyn*

I am a choreographer and dance educator. I spend most of my time working with young dancers - teaching dance technique and creating choreography. It means a great deal to me to be able to inspire and motivate young performers in Edmonton. I have witnessed dozens of my students step into their potential and learn how to express themselves through movement. It is so exciting to be a part of that experience with them.



TANYA CHUMAK | PHOTO PROVIDED





## TELL US ABOUT AN UNFORGETTABLE MOMENT YOU EXPERIENCED WHILE PERFORMING/CREATING.

### *Adrian Warchola*

The Euphoria Band performs at many weddings around Western Canada, and my favourite moment at every wedding is the look on the bride and groom's faces when they walk into their reception venue for the first time as a married couple - especially when it's to the tune of the Ukrainian Wedding March being performed by us! Their overwhelmed look of joy is unforgettable!

### *Adriana Lebedovich*

One opportunity was in April 2006 when I won the University of Calgary Concerto Competition and I played the first movement of the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra. The other unforgettable moment happened very recently. The CPO played a concert with world-renowned cellist Yo-Yo Ma. His musicality and personality are truly one of a kind, and it was such an incredible experience to be able to make music with him.

### *Alicia Shusarchuk*

I was playing the tsymbaly with my brother at the Vegreville Pysanka Music Competition in 2012. Together, we won platinum, the Highest Achievement in Instrumental Music, and the Showmanship Award, which gave us the opportunity to perform at the evening Grandstand Show. Performing on that stage was an incredible experience. The moment I remember most vividly was when we played our fast-paced Dualing Dulcimers song, we hit the last note in unison and the crowd went from being dead-silent to a blaring roar-of-applause.

### *Ana Toumine*

I remember the first time I really captivated the audience; I could feel their energy from the stage. After the performance I remember so many people coming up to me and telling me how they were moved to tears, that I had changed their lives, or helped them overcome some fears. It felt like an incredibly important moment and something that I always strive for - to help people feel something they perhaps don't have the opportunity to feel in their daily lives.

### *Benjamin Christiani*

This past fall I was invited to the Canadian Grand Masters Fiddling Championship held in Quebec this year, where the top 30 or so fiddlers from across the country were invited to compete. I was one of only three fiddlers from Alberta. In the competition each fiddler had to play a waltz, jig, reel, and a tune of choice. For my tune of choice, I played "Wedding Evening Kolomeyka." I really picked up the tempo and when I finished, the crowd went crazy. After I left the stage, I was informed that I was the first fiddler in the 27 year



EMILY BELKE | PHOTO BY: LARYSA LUCIW

history of the competition to play a Kolomeyka or any traditional Ukrainian tune. This really blew me away because there is a fairly rich Ukrainian culture here in western Canada.

### *Borys Tarasenko*

I was invited by Nextfest to create a mural on the side of the historic Roxy Theatre with fellow painter and illustrator Alex Labarda in 2014. We had a week to finish it, and by the end created something with which we were both happy. It was the first piece of public art installed that had some of my creative input, so I was pretty thrilled.

### *Brett Kissel*

The first time performing on stage with my all-time hero - Garth Brooks - will be a memory I'll never forget. After years of idolizing him, I finally got the opportunity to collaborate and tour with him. Standing beside your hero, singing "his" song, with "him," in front of 20,000 screaming fans is something I'll always remember.

### *Cassian Soltykevych*

Filming various parts of a liturgy being sung by the Ukrainian Male Chorus of Edmonton at St. George's Cathedral in Lviv with my dad conducting. Singing in such a historic place in Ukraine while the parishioners frequently looked to the choir loft to see who was singing was a touching moment.

## ON THE COVER

### *Dominika Koziak*

The experience of time escaping you. Being so engrossed while working, a very real time loss happens! You feel as though you just sat down, and when you finally look at your watch you realize “lunch” was five hours ago!

### *Emily Belke*

During my first trip to Ukraine, I was privileged enough to learn from Halyna Vantukh, who I have watched and admired for years. She is the doll in Virsky’s Doll dance. Every time I was discouraged or in a negative frame of mind I would search up Doll dance and watch her. The first day we were in the studio she grabbed my hand and let me dance with her, I cherish this moment and allow her to inspire me still to this day.

### *Ileana Cheladyn*

I remember the time I performed a duet I co-created. We had worked on this duet for over two years; we went to Montreal to work on it, we invited several mentors to work with us, and we were given four different creative residencies to work on it. We had put in so much of our being into that duet that when we finally performed it on a stage, it was sheer bliss. The final 10 minutes of the duet directs focus towards me in the center area of the stage and, essentially, I get to jam out in a structure improvisation that plays with repetition, timing, breaking the fourth wall, and having a dance-party-for-one.

### *Joyanne Rudiak*

It was grade 12 and our Drama 30 class put on a production of Anne of Green Gables. I amazingly was cast as Anne, along with another girl in our class. I was very emotional on my final night as Anne. She was a character I really connected with. During the curtain call when it was my turn to enter the stage for my bow, I poked my head around the set piece hiding me. Before me stood our entire company, as well as everyone in the audience, clapping and whooping. That moment of this absolute appreciation for my work was the best feeling in the world.



BORYS TARASENKO | PHOTO BY: LARYSA LUCIW

### *Kasia Brytan*

SVIATO 25 required an extraordinary amount of planning. The moment I will never forget is standing backstage watching Ruslana sing Shche ne vmerla Ukraine to a crowd of thousands, and hearing everyone in the square singing along and waving Ukrainian flags; it was overwhelming. Being Ukrainian means so much to me and that moment of everything coming together is one I will never, ever, forget.



ALICIA SLUSARCHUK | PHOTO BY: LARYSA LUCIW

### *Larissa Pohoreski*

This past summer, I premiered a new site-specific work in the Mill Creek Ravine in Edmonton. The show, *Before the River*, divided the audience in half and sent them on a 60-minute outdoor adventure, following characters through the trees. The show was experiential, bilingual, and nothing that I had ever worked on or created before. It was extremely well-received and played to full audiences, but one performance stands out in particular. A couple, newly arrived from Ukraine, had attended the show. I was ecstatic because they were my target audience! They told me the show really moved them, was unique and unexpected, and asked me if it would be an annual event (the show was based on Kupalo traditions and folk stories). That one interaction made the entire process worth it. Who knows? Perhaps, *Before the River* will find a way to be remounted this summer?

### *Lianna Makuch*

I can safely say that the creation and research process for *Blood of Our Soil* has been profoundly rewarding. In October 2017, I travelled to Ukraine to research the production. To choose one experience from this trip is difficult. One which stands out was the experience of digging through the overgrown graveyard of my paternal grandfather’s village of Piddubtsi, and finding the gravestones of my direct relations, including my great-great grandparents and others who share my last name.

### *Michael V. Sulyma*

There are so many moments that I cherish. One that stands out in particular is performing at the Bloor West Village Toronto Ukrainian Festival. Shumka performed its Classic Hopak in front of at least 1500, if not 2000 people, filling the outdoor venue on Bloor Street. The applause from the crowd after Hopak was deafening and something that I have never experienced before. That moment filled me up with so much pride and love for being a Ukrainian dancer; it defined that Ukrainian dancing “дyша” for me.



## *Michael Wowk*

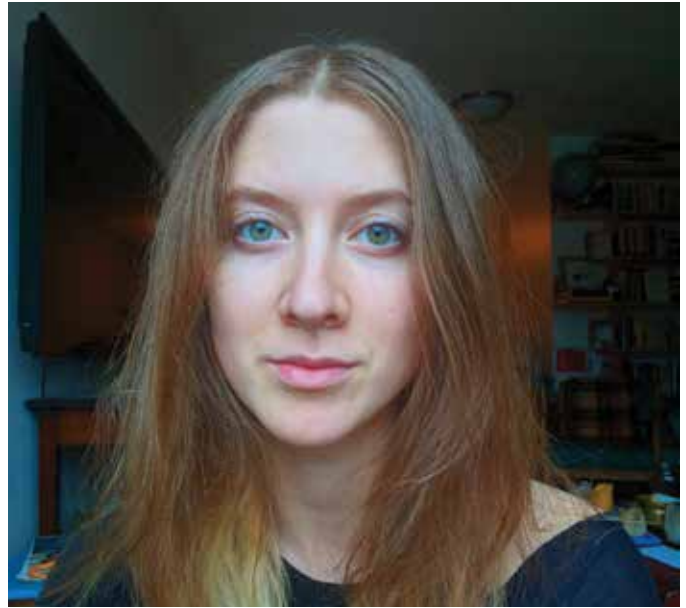
We had just finished a show in Argentina as part of Verkhovyna's Tour in 2014. The local dance group had setup a party for us at one of the local Ukrainian community halls. We arrived and there were over a hundred people greeting us with food and drink. At the beginning of the night we were all strangers but by the end of the night we had all become close friends. I will never forget how many similarities and how much in common we had as Canadian Ukrainians with the Ukrainian Argentinians. Initially, we thought it would be very difficult to communicate, but then we realized we all spoke a common language... Ukrainian.

## *Murray Steele*

One of my students at Ardrossan Yatran began to cry when her mom was trying to convince her to play in her ringette playoff game rather than come to dance class on the same night! It made me realize that I am achieving my goal of spreading my strong passion for Ukrainian dance to the next generation.

## *Myroslava Oksentiuk*

It means a lot to me because it provides me the opportunity to better understand my culture and connect me with my ancestors and perhaps



ILEANNA CHELADYN | PHOTO PROVIDED



# UCPBA

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The Ukrainian Canadian Professional and Business Association of Calgary congratulates ACUA on its 30th anniversary of promoting and showcasing Ukrainian arts and culture in Alberta.

[www.ucpbacalgary.ca](http://www.ucpbacalgary.ca)

## ON THE COVER

understand who I am - a Ukrainian! That's why I started to teach and share my craft and knowledge with others so that we could continue the tradition and return what was lost during the Soviet Period.

### *Namisha Hlus*

One morning a few years ago, I was singing at a funeral and a woman came up to me and told me how she enjoyed me singing the service and how it brought her comfort. She proceeded to tell me that this wasn't the first time she has heard me sing. As we kept talking she mentioned to me that she had added me as a cantor in her funeral arrangements. I was totally humbled, I didn't know what to say to her...I will always remember that.

### *Olesia Markevych*

I remember my very first international trip with Volya. We were in Italy in 2005. We performed on Den' Nezalezhnosti at this beautiful Italian palace. It was a wonderful night that did not end after we finished dancing, as we were greeted by so many Ukrainians who came just to see us dance. We were the first connection back to Ukraine that they had had since leaving home to work in another country. It meant so much to them to have seen us dance, and the emotion from them really touched me.

### *Rebecca Kassian (Posthumous Award)*

The first Vohon show at the Jubilee Auditorium in February 2013 was undoubtedly one of Becky's most cherished moments performing. She sat and talked to her sister Sarah for hours about what it felt like to see the seats, perform tech and know that in a few days/hours she would be able to perform to a 'packed house' and spin your heart out during an unforgettable Hopak!



TANYA PACHOLOK | PHOTO BY: LARYSA LUCIW



STEPHANIA ROMANIUK | PHOTO BY: LARYSA LUCIW

Equal to that moment was being able to play the feature role of Baba Yaga in Vohon's 2015 production of Kolektsiya. She embraced that role and looked to all of her Vohon family to grow into the role and continued to improve with every practice.

### *Stephan Bociurkiw*

My most unforgettable moment was touring Ukraine in 2010 and visiting the Virsky studio in Kyiv. Virsky surprised us with an entire half of a performance with a live orchestra. Seeing the dances that I have watched a hundred times on YouTube and some that I have danced myself, being performed to the highest level possible right in front of my eyes, was one of the most incredible moments of my life.

### *Stephanie Romaniuk*

In 2015, I was invited to participate in Незбуття Квітка one of several concerts dedicated to Kvitka Cisyk. This one was taking place in the Odesa Opera House. I was the only diaspora singer involved, and was going to be singing Журавлі a cappella.

### *Stephanie Bahniuk*

During my time at Williamstown, I had the opportunity to design the costumes for a production of Mad Forest in the Small Black Box theatre. Broadway costume designer Michael Krass was in town designing one of the main stage shows and he took the time to see my production. After the show, he sat down with me and gave me his thoughts and advice. It meant so much to me that he would take the time to contribute to my development and education.

### *Tamara Soltkevych*

Last year, I took a creative writing course with the City of Edmonton over a three month period. I will never forget how others shared their struggles with writing and the moment I realized that others are facing very similar challenges as I am. It was inspiring to meet other writers, support one another in our work, and talk about our dreams.

### *Tanya Chumak*

Every performance I have on stage is unforgettable in its own way. No performance is ever the same and the adrenaline and



feeling of dancing in front of an audience is truly unique. The performances that stand out the most to me are ones with a strong storyline. If you can find a way to resonate with a character or story you are portraying, the performance becomes more meaningful and those are the moments you won't forget.

## *Tanya Pacholok*

An unforgettable moment while performing on stage was in the end scene of *Blood of Our Soil*. Set in contemporary Donetsk, my character Nastia had just come out of hiding from an officer and unintentionally smothered her baby while trying to keep her from crying. The tragic realization of having just lost my child coupled with the other heavy political themes throughout the production,

this moment would forever be one of the most difficult, yet most unforgettable moments that I've experienced while performing.

## *Tatiana Cheladyn*

Right after I graduated with my Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, I choreographed and produced my first dance show. This was something that took a lot of work. Looking back, I didn't really know what I was getting myself into! But, it was so rewarding - I worked with six emerging dancers to create the show and we had one show on a cold December night. I think only about 30 people came to the show, but the dancers gave an amazing performance. I was inspired by their dedication to creating something new and exciting with me and hope to create something like that again in the future.

## WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU FACE WITH YOUR ART?

### *Adrian Warchola*

With the rise of digital music, DJ's, and the influence of Top 40 music among youth at live events, it's a challenge to stay relevant and engaged with an audience's ever-changing music preferences. We work hard to bring in new styles of performing traditional Ukrainian songs. We focus on taking a song from what is expected, and adding the unexpected - something you only hear when a live band performs it. We also continuously add Top 40 songs to our repertoire - whether that's a Ukrainian song or English.

### *Adriana Lebedovich*

I think the biggest challenge many artists face is lack of funding. Without the arts, there would be no escape from the "real world," and that is an important part of daily life.

### *Alicia Slusarchuk*

The biggest challenge I face with my art is finding a way to preserve it. I, myself, can name only a handful of talented artists who currently play the tsymbaly - as it is a rare art-form. One of my biggest goals is to teach and perform the tsymbaly to as many people as I can, in the hopes of maintaining and preserving the integrity of the art and the Ukrainian culture that comes with it. This also applies to Ukrainian dance. The more people that can become involved and trained with the art-form, the longer it shall live on.

### *Ana Toumine*

There is a huge vulnerability associated with singing. For the singer, the combination of expressing emotion, interpreting the music and the character, all the while maintaining a technical level helps access these elements and calls for a high demand of mental focus and presence. When



STEFAN BOCIURKIW | PHOTO BY: LARYSA LUCIW

all these elements are achieved, it is such a liberating feeling, but can also be extremely difficult to access in certain scenarios.

### *Benjamin Christiani*

The Diamonds Band plays for club dances. The crowds are mostly made up of seniors. I really enjoy playing for dances as it provides a unique opportunity to share my music. Dances used to be a very popular social event but there are fewer people who are continuing this important culture, tradition, and lifestyle.

### *Borys Tarasenko*

I would say the hardest thing is to convince yourself that it's worthwhile. In this age people are receiving a tidal wave of content

## ON THE COVER

and information on a daily basis and it's difficult to see your work as important and not just more noise.

### ***Brett Kissel***

Staying current is always difficult in an ever changing market place. Trying to be a trend setter is a challenge while also staying true to your roots. The balance of authenticity and thinking outside the box artistically is a constant teeter-totter for me.

### ***Cassian Soltykevych***

When you have more than one contact person for a commission and you have nine suggestions from six people coming your way.

### ***Dominika Koziak***

As for most artists, the main struggles are time, space and money. It's very easy to create if you have a large budget, which allows you to purchase higher quality materials, and have room to experiment with new methods, or be able to make large scale works. With space, you have an area dedicated to creativeness. If you have both money and space, time allows you to fully focus on your work. My biggest challenge so far has been acquiring and balancing these three struggles.

### ***Emily Belke***

Time and travelling. The smaller communities have a desire to learn and enjoy the fun of Ukrainian culture but it is difficult to bring the cultural leaders to them.

### ***Ileanna Cheladyn***

Futility. How am I supposed to believe that my art and my work and my effort has done any good for anyone (other than my parents)? I don't struggle with supporting the work of others but... my work? Sometimes I can't help but to cut myself short or cut myself out because the sensations of total, crippling insecurity are hard to metabolize. I struggle with my social location (a white, cisgendered, educated, able, relatively financially

secure woman) in my rationalizations of why I make work and what ideas I use to make work. Finally, I struggle with time and the way it slips out between my fingers or moves like the thickest and coldest of molasses.

### ***Joyanne Rudiak***

Being creative is my favourite thing in the world, but my inner critic speaks loudly and I constantly have to remind myself to be brave and put my work out there. It's a vulnerable thing, being an artist.

### ***Kasia Brytan***

Time and money. I find I am able to do less and less acting and stage managing due to less funding for projects that are accessible to me. I would love to write and produce more films about topics close to my heart, like grief, bullying, and promoting different cultures, but as a young adult I can only do so much volunteer work without funding.

### ***Larissa Pohoreski***

My biggest challenge, is that I have too many interests! I joke that the reason I work in so many different aspects of the arts is because I get bored and cannot stand to focus on just one! I have been questioned about my practices when taking a traditional idea and stretching it into the contemporary. It can be difficult to find the freedom when it comes to sharing aspects of our culture.

### ***Lianna Makuch***

My greatest challenge to support my artistic goals is obtaining funding required for creating and presenting meaningful work. Gambling financially annually, and relying on project/foundation funding every season is my biggest obstacle to my career as an independent artist.

### ***Michael V. Sulyma***

I believe that performing arts should never be static in terms of its development. I think the biggest challenge for me as a performing artist is how to create work that is relevant, makes a connection, and how I can affect an audience, even if it is one person. Dance is a process and you never reach a "finish line" or "end product," you want to keep creating so that you can make that connection with the audience. That is the thing I love about theatre. Every moment on stage is unique.

### ***Michael Wowk***

As an engineer, I primarily use the left side of my brain and my job can be focused on solving science and mathematical issues. It can be a challenge to alter my thinking in order to think more creatively.

### ***Murray Steele***

The biggest challenge I face is finding original or uncommon Ukrainian dance music to choreograph. Even with many different resources, it is not uncommon to hear the same rendition of a musical



TATIANA CHELADYN | PHOTO BY: LARYSA LUCIWI





DOMINIKA KOZIAK | PHOTO PROVIDED

piece during a Ukrainian dance festival. My desire is to provide my students with music that is fun to dance and acquire music nobody else has. I have turned to collecting a vast array of vintage records and converting them to digital copies!

### **Myroslava Oksentiuk**

While I was studying design I came to understand one thing: there are so many modern technologies and ideas but people started to forget the culture and traditions that were centuries old. That's when I decided not to create anything new - but rather understand what already exists. Because every culture, especially Ukrainian, already has a depth of understanding of the unity of colours, harmony and ornaments. This is already the best and ideal traditional design.

### **Namisha Hlus**

You really need to look after yourself and your health. Your voice is your instrument and if you get sick and have a performance "the show must go on." You have to do anything and everything you can to get better.

### **Olesia Markevych**

Ukrainian dance is a part-time pursuit. It is done for enjoyment. There is no career in Ukrainian dance unless you want to teach. It is sometimes hard to find the time to commit, both to attend rehearsals regularly, as well as to put in the work outside of that, going to shows, workshops, promoting, etc.

### **Rebecca Kassian** (Posthumous Award)

The mind and spirit may be willing but the body begins to face challenges when dancing. Becky had physical challenges that many Ukrainian Dancers eventually face and that is to endure some type of injury. That did not stop her, she would faithfully attend rehearsals when unable to dance and took steps to rectify her

## TOP 30 UNDER 30

injuries through surgery. Her dream was to continue to travel and dance and nothing was going to stop that dream. Even when injury struck, she was on the sidelines at every practice.

### **Stephan Bociurkiw**

The biggest challenge is to manage the time commitment that is required to practice the art of dance. Eight hours of rehearsals per week, plus performances can be a challenge to balance with my career and personal life.

### **Stephania Romaniuk**

Apathy, complacency and moral relativism, which I believe are surely doing as much damage to art and culture as they are to basic human interaction. If you make music, you abide, whether consciously or unconsciously, by certain values. I believe so much can be gained from studying and knowing the values and sounds that the great singers of Bel Canto gave us.

### **Stephanie Bahniuk**

Working as a freelance artist makes for an incredibly hectic life. I am constantly balancing multiple projects that are at various stages of



## Celebrating 40 Years



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UCSS—a non-profit, charitable organization responding to the needs of the Ukrainian community.

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UCSS continues Community and "Pomich Ukraini" fundraisings.

Thanks to generous support of our benefactors and volunteers  
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## ON THE COVER

the process and it is just part of making a living in this field. With experience, I have become better at managing this but this career is really my life. It isn't a job I ever get to step away from.

### *Tamara Soltykevych*

I find it hard to stay motivated after submitting my work to so many different publishing outlets and receiving multiple rejection letters for work I poured a lot of heart into over and over again.

### *Tanya Chumak*

The biggest challenge I face with my art is constant improvement. There is always room for perfection and growth. It is also important to maintain a clear concentration and focus and to push yourself beyond your limits in every rehearsal and performance.

### *Tanya Pacholok*

Some of the biggest challenges I face are my own self-doubts, insecurities and fear of showing vulnerability. The most powerful and rewarding art can come from personal struggles, however, these can also be the most difficult emotions to access. As a young woman who is beginning to create and write more of my own work, I find it often easier to perform other people's work than my own. This is a continuous challenge to find a balance of using my own stories, and helping tell other people's stories.



OLESIA MARKEVUCH | PHOTO PROVIDED

### *Tatiana Cheladyn*

Like many artists, I find that I go through phases in my creation process. Sometimes I'm super creative and productive. And then I go through periods of time where I don't create anything at all. During these down times, it can be really discouraging. It's difficult to keep creating when the inspiration won't come. I've learned to wait for it, and keep myself ready by continuing to practice my craft (both dancing and choreographing) even if I don't like what I make. Being open to making something bad and chalking it up to practice has opened many doors for me.

## WHAT INSPIRES YOU?



LIANNA MAKUCH | PHOTO PROVIDED

### *Adrian Warchola*

Canada's first Ukrainian immigrants. The hardships and challenges they faced moving to a new land are insurmountable and difficult to imagine nowadays. Looking through old photographs of old trunks being unpacked with violins and instruments inside, you see how music brought a little comfort and a sense of familiarity to families in their new land of Canada.

### *Adriana Lebedovich*

One of my greatest inspirations comes from playing Education concerts for school children with the CPO, especially when we play O Canada at the beginning. It is such a joy to hear their voices in the concert hall, singing proudly for their country.

### *Alicia Slusarchuk*

People inspire me. Everyone has a different story and a different path in life. Everyone also has a different concept of success. Hearing and witnessing the paths and experiences that people have gone through to achieve success is what drives me.



## Ana Toumine

Other art, nature, and overall happiness. When my life outside of singing feels full, my artistic range feels full of colour, creativity, and possibility. I also love reading and writing poetry, illustrating, and creating with my hands. It's a different form of expression that often helps me learn more about myself, which in turn is reflected in my singing.

## Benjamin Christiani

I have done some musical therapy at St Michael's Care facility in Edmonton. Most of the residents there are Ukrainian so they really get excited when they hear a tune from years gone by. However, once I started playing there on a regular basis, people from the dementia ward were brought into the activity room in wheelchairs by the assistants and although they may not be able to communicate verbally, they start tapping their toes, nodding their heads, or looking around if they hear something they recognize. I have enjoyed accompanying St. Basil's Sadochuk three and four year old programs for concerts and caroling. They are a bright young light in our Ukrainian community.

## Borys Tarasenko

Things come from all directions. A lot of ideas enter your head when you're just out for a walk or sitting in church. There's a lot of great work to see on instagram and other parts of the internet, but seeing it in real life, whether it's a play or gallery artwork or concert whatever, frequently makes me want to keep creating.

## Brett Kissel

As a songwriter, I can get inspired by pretty much anything and turn into some kind of lyric or melody. Spending time with my daughters, or date nights with my wife can certainly inspire me. As an entertainer, I am often inspired by the crowds that come to see me play.

## Cassian Soltykevych

Those moments in a day where you have a minute to think "wow, this is cool."

## Dominika Koziak

Art is always some version of a self-portrait of the artist. My art is a reflection of my surroundings, my past, my interests and more. A major influence in my work that is clearly addressed, is the Byzantine influence through stylization, method, and of course, gold. Growing up I attended church twice a week (not including Holy Days!), and this left a large impact on me.

## Emily Belke

My students, Virsky, Epic Music, and a good story inspires me and my art.

## Ileana Cheladyn

Indexing, repetition, natural beauty, artificial beauty, the mud of spring thaws, a glimpse of a naked body through a crack in the door, biopower/biopolitics, Giorgio Agamben, reading, good quality ball-point gel pens in blue or black with 0.4mm tips, high quality journals with blank paper, the process of emptying my bag at the end of every night, the mood I wake up in as a variable for my day and interactions. The way my mom's eyes sparkle when she's proud of me, my father's fascination with animal behaviour and his extraordinary encyclopedic knowledge..

## Joyanne Rudiak

So many things inspire me! An amazing musical performance, a really good book, trees, Pinterest, little moments between people on the bus.... Really, if I find beauty in something, whether that's a Buzzfeed video, our big, Alberta sky, or a quote, then I'll be inspired and want to respond.

## Kasia Brytan

First and foremost, my mother. She was my hero and is the reason I continue to chase my passions. I am also inspired by the hardships we are facing, as Ukrainians as well as Canadians. Generally, I like where we are headed as an arts community by challenging stereotypes and discussing more topics that in the past have been ignored. At the end of every show and project, there is this magical moment where everyone feels pride in what they have accomplished, the growth they've seen in themselves, and that moment is always inspiration for me to keep going and start the next project.

## Larissa Pohoreski

I am inspired by memories and emotions, personal stories. I believe that the personal is universal, and that by sharing an intimate



LARISSA POHORESKI | PHOTO BY: LARYSA LUCIW

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reflection or part of myself I am able to connect with others. I love colour, folk art such as petrykivka, urban street art, movement and music. I love to see what, “makes people tick” and to capture that in any medium I can. I'm also intrigued by folk stories/mythology, language, and the similarities we have to other cultures.

### *Lianna Makuch*

The magic of theatre is what is most inspiring to me in my creative pursuits. I believe the theatre can touch and affect people by creating an empathetic experience only possible by the immediate experience of a live performance. That, to me, is true magic. The opportunity to create work that I believe is important is inspiring to me. It is important to have a voice in my community, and to be creating work that I believe inspires change. And the belief that the performing arts can be a powerful medium—not only to enlighten and influence—but to advocate on behalf of community goals and bolster others in that same pursuit, is incredibly inspiring to me as I continue to create.

### *Michael V. Sulyma*

The people around me: my dad, sister, fellow dancers and collaborators. They all share the same love of Ukrainian dance and theatre as I do. They motivate me to do better and to continue to pursue being a part of the magic that is the performing arts.

### *Michael Wowk*

Bringing Ukrainians together through dance, song, and sport. Seeing the Ukrainian community in Edmonton thrive and continue to get stronger; also seeing that the Ukrainian language, religion, songs, and dance steps live on for many generations to come.



BENJAMIN CHRISTIANI | PHOTO BY: LARYSA LUCIW

### *Murray Steele*

I am inspired by the kids I have in dance class and they look forward to class all week. They are excited and then I get excited and we all try really hard. The kids make my role as their instructor very easy and their passion for Ukrainian dance is contagious. As time goes on, my inspiration has changed. My drive now revolves around passing on what I know about dance. I still love to dance but the new dancers' hunger for knowledge and my desire to contribute to Shumka's goals is what brings me back to rehearsals.

### *Myroslava Oksentiuk*

The biggest challenge of my art is simply that many people don't know what is authentic Ukrainian Folk Art. It's actually more diverse than people realize. Therefore, it has become my mission to study it and bring it back to the community and share information about our traditions while we can still find our roots!

### *Namisha Hlus*

Every time I see someone pursuing their dream full-time there is a drive within me that knows I could do it too and it pushes me to find every opportunity to take the next step in my journey.

### *Olesia Markevych*

I love connecting with people. Having that opportunity through something I love to do is so special and hard to explain. Bringing out emotion in others through dance or seeing the joy in the learning of a new song makes it all worth it.

### *Rebecca Kassian (Posthumous Award)*

Becky's inspiration to dance stemmed from a very strong Ukrainian background through her grandparents and parents, family traditions and watching her mom and sister dance.

She also looked to her dance instructors right from the beginning who pushed her to be the best dancer she could and that showed right to the end. She strived to be better at everything, a spin with the perfect spot, a combination to get the timing perfect, or just a simple transition into a different spot on stage.

### *Stephan Bociurkiw*

In both dance and my professional career, I'm inspired by the challenge and the opportunity in making a difference and impact in the organizations I am involved in. Dance inspires me to be creative, which significantly influences and benefits my marketing career.

### *Stephania Romaniuk*

In terms of Ukrainian folk and popular music, my first and still greatest inspiration is Alexis Kochan and Paris to Kyiv. Before that, it was the older girls singing at tabir by the lake for Ivano Kupalo. More



recently, I've come to love Renata Bogdanska, the finest interpreter of Bohdan Wesolowsky's music.

### *Stephanie Bahniuk*

The team I am working with on each project is usually my main source of inspiration. One of the things I love about theatre is how collaborative it is. Being in a room with a group of talented artists who all have their own perspective on a text really inspires me and pushes me to be more creative.

### *Tamara Soltykevych*

Often reading the work of authors I admire inspires me to keep trying — I'd like to get my work to sound as good as theirs one day. My family supports me in my writing and this also helps me keep motivated.

### *Tanya Chumak*

There are two things that inspire me. My peers and fellow dancers inspire me on a regular basis. It is wonderful to see such talented dancers everyday and to be able to learn from them. The other thing that inspires me are young children hoping to have a career in dance one day. They remind me every day of how fortunate I am to be able to pursue my career as a ballerina.

### *Tanya Pacholok*

I am inspired to create art that shares a story and allows people to connect on a deeper emotional level. I am inspired by the courage, convictions and will of people around me, especially the strength and endurance of generations before me, including my grandparents who immigrated from Ukraine.

### *Tatiana Cheladyn*

I'm inspired by how I can turn everyday, pedestrian movement and ideas into art. I like to reflect on how we, as humans, live our lives and how I can explore things that we experience everyday through dance. I'm also really interested in what audiences see when they watch dance — I love finding out how my work has been interpreted afterwards.



JOYANNA RUDIAK | PHOTO BY: LARYSA LUCIW

## FOCUS ON FIBRE ART ASSOCIATION

**COMPETITION & EXHIBIT:**

**2018 Theme: Climate Change**

Climate Change can be political, social, environmental. Local, National, Global.

*What does it mean to you? Say it in fibre.*

Rug Hooking, Quilting, Needlework, Textile Design, Hand Knitting, Weaving/Tapestry, Felting, Mixed Media, Cloth Dolls, Wearables, Other Fibre Art, Youth

FFAA aim is to encourage, foster and develop among the citizens of the community, excellence and appreciation of fibre as an art form.

[www.focusonfibrearts.org](http://www.focusonfibrearts.org)

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK  
FOR FUTURE EVENTS

Focus on Fibre Arts Association (FFAA) will be at The Works Festival in downtown Edmonton, June 22 - July 4, 2017.

Come and join us for daily fibre events and displays, presented by our various member guilds: Edmonton Needlecraft Guild, Edmonton & District Quilters Guild, Edmonton Rug Hooking Guild, Leduc Black Gold Quilt Patch and Edmonton Weavers Guild.

Check our website for details.

**Embroidery & Handwork with Bettina Matzkuhn**  
October 2017  
Registration & more information go to our website

## ON THE COVER

### HOW DO YOU **CONNECT** WITH YOUR **UKRAINIAN** HERITAGE?



BRETT KISSEL | PHOTO PROVIDED

#### *Adrian Warchola*

I am an active member of Edmonton's Ukrainian community, and am proud to give back to the same community that supported me to get to where I am today. I have volunteered for a number of organizations including the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Alberta Provincial Council, the University of Alberta Ukrainian Students' Society, and most recently with UFest Edmonton Ukrainian Festival. I have also participated in a variety of Ukrainian events in the community, by assembling duos or trios and background or feature entertainment.

I would be remiss not to mention how integral my upbringing in PLAST Ukrainian Scouts was in planting the "iskra" for my love of music. I often think back to the nights singing traditional Ukrainian songs around the campfire with my friends. Those memories are so fond and really inspired the founding of Euphoria.

#### *Adriana Lebedovich*

I attend as many Zabavas and Ukrainian events as I can, as well as prepare all of the traditional dishes for both Christmas and Easter. I also write Pysanky during the Easter season, and my favourite time to do so is after a concert, coming home and writing to clear my mind. I was a member of the Korinnya Ukrainian Folk Ensemble, in both the choir and orchestra, and I sang in the church choir at St. Vladimir's Ukrainian Orthodox Church for many years. On one occasion, my mom, who was the choir director, was sick, and didn't come to church on Sunday. I decided that there would be a choir anyway, and at the age of 15 or so, I conducted the church choir for

the first time! I was also a member of Zhyto, a Calgary-based Ukrainian dance band, for a few years and was able to combine music with my Ukrainian heritage, and a jam session over the holidays usually erupts with the family.

#### *Alicia Shusarchuk*

I connect with my Ukrainian heritage by immersing myself in the Ukrainian community and by volunteering with various Ukrainian organizations. I have also studied the Ukrainian language in school and have had the opportunity to study the language, culture and history in Ukraine. Another way I connect with my heritage is by praying and attending the church my ancestors built, Pruth Ukrainian Orthodox Holy Ascension Church. My ancestors have passed down many rituals and traditions that I follow.

#### *Ana Toumine*

I am often told by teachers and coaches I have a very Slavic sounding tone. The Ukrainian people historically are very hard working people and I carry this in my voice. I love that it is so easily identified in my sound! There is also a lot of Czech and Russian opera that speaks to me very strongly. I was raised speaking Ukrainian and with many Ukrainian Catholic traditions. It's also made it helpful to learn and understand other Slavic opera librettos and music. I feel I can connect and understand the characters. Because of the Slavic language root, I find it so easy to connect to the text, as well as the melancholic, often nationalistic, flavour to the musical language.

#### *Benjamin Christiani*

I happen to be half Ukrainian and celebrate the yearly holidays, attend Ukrainian Catholic Church, participate and volunteer at the



KASIA BRYTAN | PHOTO PROVIDED

Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village, and still work the land on my great grandfather's farms east of Lamont.

### ***Borys Tarasenko***

I grew up in the Ukrainian Catholic Church, speaking Ukrainian with my family and community, going to Ridna Shkola (Saturday School) and Kursy (Ivan Franko School of Ukrainian Studies), Ukrainian dancing in Barvinok (Calgary) and Verkhovyna (Edmonton), singing with St. George's Church Choir, and volunteering with CYM (the Ukrainian Youth Association). I'm still connected to a lot of these organizations and I cantor for my Church regularly. This past summer I was commissioned by the Canadian Institute for Ukrainian Studies to produce a Ukrainian-Canadian themed colouring book they could give out during Edmonton's Heritage Festival. I titled it Cossack Platter and received a lot of nice feedback and interest surrounding it.

At times it is difficult to engage with certain aspects of my heritage. However, I do feel now that Ukrainian nationalism is not like other forms of nationalism. The people and culture have been in danger for most of history and I feel like Ukrainian pride is about trying to hold on to something that is always trying to be destroyed. I see myself continuing to work in the Ukrainian community, and continuing to work with Ukrainian subject matter.

### ***Brett Kissel***

I am very close to my grandparents who have always celebrated our roots and our heritage. Often at family dinners my grandmother, Irene, would prepare traditional Ukrainian dishes, all the while my grandfather, Ron, told stories of the olden days, giving us perspective on how far we've come from our family's humble beginnings. As a child and teenager I Ukrainian danced for over a decade.

### ***Cassian Soltykevych***

Every day — clients usually have some sort of a Ukrainian connection, I read Ukrainian news, I laugh at Ukrainian jokes and emails to/from people in the organizations I'm involved with. Cranking the TV volume whenever someone on CBC or Global or CTV mentions the word "Ukraine."

### ***Dominika Koziak***

Within my art, although Byzantine stylization does not specifically represent Ukrainian heritage, it is influenced by my religion, being a Ukrainian Catholic.

### ***Ileanna Cheladyn***

I connect with my Ukrainian heritage through cooking. And there's no doubt that the physical rigor I put into my work resembles Ukrainian dance principles and foundations of performing, presenting, and moving.



MICHAEL V. SULYMA | PHOTO BY: LARYSA LUCIW

### ***Joyanne Rudiak***

My connection with my Ukrainian heritage has really morphed as I've grown. When I was younger, I really connected with my heritage through dance and music. I attended every zabava I could find, listened to Ukrainian music, and surrounded myself with friends who shared that passion for our ancestral culture. Now, I find I've moved away from that scene and instead connect with my heritage through my Ukrainian Catholic faith. Through studying theology and spending more of my time exploring our liturgical tradition, I find that whatever connection I have with my Ukrainian heritage is through that lens.

### ***Kasia Brytan***

Besides performing and touring with the Cheremosh Ukrainian Dance Company, I tend to bring as much Ukrainian heritage into my projects as I can.

Last summer I earned the title of Miss Petite Northwest Alberta 2016 and competed in the national beauty competition, Miss Canada Globe Petite, in Toronto. The competition lasted a week and I fully embraced my Ukrainian heritage the entire time. For the talent competition, I performed a Ukrainian dancing solo (thanks to the help of Mykola Kanevets!); for my National Costume, I chose to wear a traditional Hopak costume and spoke about why it is culturally significant to Ukrainians, and also why Ukrainians are significant to Canadian identity. While I did not win the competition, I reached out to many new people across all of Canada from various cultural backgrounds and taught them things about Ukraine they never knew before.

### ***Larissa Pohoreski***

I connect with my Ukrainian heritage daily — through family activities, language, performing with the Viter Ukrainian Dancers and Folk Choir, and through traditions such as writing pysanky. In fact, the majority of my art is influenced by my Ukrainian



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heritage. Most of my visual art draws motifs from pysanka designs or rozpys and embroidery patterns. My artwork was chosen for the 2016 Hamaliya-inspired Shevchenko bookmark campaign, was featured in the ACUA. Five Waves of Inspiration gallery exhibit, and graces CD album covers for the Viter Ukrainian Folk Choir and Ukrainian rock-polka band Zhyto. I recently had a new work featured at Latitude53 in Edmonton as part of the nation-wide Wish150 project, and that piece was also inspired by the Ukrainian-Albertan community experience. I am part of the creative team behind Pyretic Production's upcoming show *Blood of Our Soil*, and also created an original painting inspired by this work. Last year I also started up my own theatre company, *Mavka*, and began production on a one-woman Ukrainian-English bilingual show entitled "Moonshine".

### *Lianna Makuch*

As a Ukrainian Canadian and a theatre artist, I believe it is my duty to use my chosen medium and my personal voice to bring the realities of my ancestral land to the forefront. For so many Ukrainian Canadians from several waves of immigration, including my own family, Ukraine is not the "old country;" it is still "home." With *Blood of Our Soil*, I hope to provide an opportunity for audiences of all backgrounds to convene, learn, empathize and heal.

### *Michael V. Sulyma*

I connect with it through dance. That is one of the reasons why Ukrainian dance is so dear to me it connects me with my family and with a community that is so amazing to interact and collaborate with. As a fourth generation Ukrainian Canadian, dance was always a part of our family, even though our use of the language was sparse, but Ukrainian dance and the ability to connect both in Ukraine and around the world with this art form keeps me steeped in the ability to communicate my story.

### *Michael Wowk*

I connect to Ukrainian heritage through song and dance, I attend a Ukrainian church, belong to the Ukrainian Youth Association, and am a member of the League of Ukrainian Canadians. In the last three years, I have also spearheaded and established the Ukraine Athletic Sport Club in Edmonton.

### *Murray Steele*

My dad's parents moved from Scotland after WWII and my mom's parents moved from Ukraine at the beginning of the 1920's. Because of my upbringing, I happen to be more in tune with my Ukrainian Heritage than my Scottish heritage. As a Canadian-Ukrainian I enjoy keeping updated with current events in Ukraine, teaching and participating in Ukrainian dance, and attending Ukrainian social events. I am also working on reading and speaking Ukrainian better, but that is more of a long-term goal.

### *Myroslava Oksentiuk*

I hope that my interests and research will help many people, especially in the diaspora to understand more deeply how things were in the past, how to create and what it means in order to stay connected to our roots.

### *Namisha Hlus*

I'm very active in the Ukrainian community and in many different ways. I sing a lot within my church community: Weddings, funerals, baptisms, Sunday services in the choir of my home parish and out at some of the country parishes. I have been invited to guest conduct several choirs in the community and I sing in many of them. I have started to make some solo performances.

### *Olesia Markevych*

My parents immersed me in the community at a young age. The cultural traditions from holidays and celebrations are just as much a part of my life as anything else. I speak the language. I know about my family's history and how they came to Canada. I belong or have belonged to many different Ukrainian groups and organizations. These things are an important part of my identity.

### *Rebecca Kassian (Posthumous Award)*

#### **Family**

Ukrainian traditions are very important to our family—celebrating all the holidays together such as Christmas, Easter, and all the Ukrainian traditions that come with those. Becky was the pyrohy princess in the family, learning to make pyrohy at a very young age and then perfecting her own pyrohy dough recipe from her Baba Kassian. She was passionate about making them right. Becky would make and sell pyrohy to fundraise for her touring with Vohon – gathering both of her Babas to help for several pyrohy pinching bees where many dozen were prepared in a day.



**Faith**

Becky was also very spiritual and sang with her mom in the home church parish choir whenever she was home at the farm for the weekend.

**Dance**

Becky truly expressed her love for her heritage through Ukrainian dance—her favourite form of artistic expression. She learned about all the regions of Ukraine and much Ukrainian history and heritage through her years of Ukrainian dance.

***Stephan Bociurkiw***

Ukrainian dance connects directly with my heritage by preserving traditional Ukrainian dances and adapting them for stage. I also connect with my heritage outside of dance by speaking Ukrainian and being involved in other organization such as Plast.

***Stephania Romaniuk***

My Ukrainian heritage is very important to me. I can't imagine life without it.

***Stephanie Bahniuk***

My Ukrainian heritage has influenced my artistic career since I was three years old. My parents registered me for a Ukrainian dance class and I knew I wanted to be in theatre ever since. I spent seven years as a dancer with the Ukrainian Shumka Dancers and toured internationally and across Canada. After I retired from Shumka, I continued to work with the company as a design consultant and designer the set for their new production of Kobzar. I am currently working on developing a piece with Pyretic Productions called Blood of Our Soil. The multidisciplinary performance combines folk dance, music and video projection to tell the story of this woman and address the current conflict in Ukraine.

***Tamara Soltykevych***

I've been involved with the Ukrainian community most of my life. Ukrainian was my first language, and my parents didn't let us speak English at home. They also ensured that my brothers and I were exposed to many Ukrainian traditions. I am thankful that they cultivated such a rich Ukrainian environment for us — not everyone is so lucky. I attended Plast (Ukrainian Scouts) as a child and participated on the Ukrainian Students' Society Executive during my university years. I took Ukrainian dance as soon as I could walk and continued dancing until my retirement from the Volya Ukrainian Dance Ensemble last year. Now I am a member of the Verkhovyna Choir which keeps me connected to the community.

***Tanya Chumak***

I have always had a strong connection and involvement with my Ukrainian community. I've attended Ukrainian preschool (Sadochok)



ANA TOUMINE | PHOTO PROVIDED

as well as Ukrainian School. I am a member of Plast, a Ukrainian youth organization. I have also been a counsellor at Plast summer camps as well as throughout the year. I enjoyed Ukrainian dancing at the Tryzub School of Ukrainian Dance as well as Junior Tryzub. I have also danced at events in the Ukrainian community. I am very grateful for my Ukrainian heritage and my connection to the Ukrainian community.

***Tanya Pacholok***

Having graduated from the Ukrainian International Bilingual Program, studied Ukrainian in university and in Ukraine, danced with Shumka for six years, and been involved with my church youth group for many years, I feel very connected with my Ukrainian heritage. I speak Ukrainian and continue to maintain my connections to my Ukrainian community by being involved in artistic projects such as "Blood Of Our Soil". While dancing with the renowned Ukrainian Shumka Dancers, I toured and performed on various stages across Canada.

***Tatiana Cheladyn***

I started my dance training in Ukrainian dance. While I don't practice or choreograph Ukrainian anymore, I still draw on my knowledge and skill set that I gained from those years of training and performing. I always take that piece of my culture with me in everything that I do!

## WHO HAS INFLUENCED YOUR ARTISTIC PURSUITS?

### *Adrian Warchola*

My parents. Growing up, it would be an understatement to say I didn't enjoy going to piano lessons but my parents continued to encourage me to learn and move through the Royal Conservatory of Music program. Funny enough, it was only after I finished my RCM studies that I found my love for music and piano, and later voice. I thank my parents for raising me in a music environment and teaching me the importance of pursuing music alongside my other career pursuits.

I also come from a very musical family, from my grandfather Roman Soltykewych, who founded the Dnipro choir, to my father who was a member of Dumka arguably one of Canada's most famous Ukrainian-Canadian bands. I am proud to participate in and continue their musical contributions to our community.

### *Adriana Lebedovich*

My parents have been very influential in my music career, always supporting me and helping me achieve my goals. I have also looked up to my cousin, Carissa Klopoushak, member of the National Arts Centre Orchestra.

### *Alicia Shusarchuk*

My mom has influenced me the most with my artistic pursuits. She is the reason I started dancing and playing the tsymbaly. She can always be seen in the audience cheering me on.

### *Ana Toumine*

There are a few levels of influence that have really impacted my pursuit. The first being Canadian coloratura-soprano Tracy Dahl. She has been such a great inspiration and mentor over the years. I continue to be influenced by my teachers and mentors, Dominique Labelle, Stephen Hargreaves, and Michael McMahon.

My family has also been a huge influence on my artistic pursuits. Both of my parents were professional ballet dancers, and from the beginning I was so inspired by their photos on the stage that I knew that was where I also belonged. My brother is also an extremely talented visual artist, and seeing his focus and creativity equally inspires me.

A singer from the Ukrainian community who has really inspired me is Canadian soprano Andriana Chuchman. It makes me feel so encouraged seeing another PLASTun (Scout organization) who is such a success story. And of course, famous singers such as Renée Fleming and Maria Callas are huge idols of mine for many reasons besides their incredible artistry and talent.

### *Benjamin Christiani*

Charlie, Debbie, and Peter Gargus, Bruce and Berni Yakoweshen, Joe and Micheal Hycrck, Jimmy and John Wacko, Metro Radomsky, Johnny Kinsawich, Ron Lakusta, Brian Cherwick, Rod Olstad, Ihor Nedoshytko, Wild Rose Fiddlers and Alberta Society of Fiddlers. Fellow band members Craig Repchuk, Rick Chomyn, Chester Chodzicki, and Nestor Worobets. Old Time bands still around, and of course, Baba and Dido.

### *Borys Tarasenko*

I'm a bandit who steals from everyone. I read a lot of comics growing up and I've been surrounded by Byzantine iconography my whole life, which seeps into my work. My friends who are creating are always influencing me. Specific artists I always come back to include Brad Neely, Jeff Lemire, Richard Diebenkorn, KOOL A.D., Saul Steinberg, Tomi Ungerer, Quentin Blake, Stacey Rozich, Marcel Dzama, and Laurie Anderson.

### *Brett Kissel*

I have so many influences from family members to musical heroes, but my first three, and most important, would have to be my grandfathers: Lloyd Kissel, Ron Wengzynowski, and my "adopted" grandfather, Russ Kowtun. All three of these men made me who I am today. Whether they were teaching me lessons, driving me to concerts, taking me on the tractor, or simply just being in the audience to support me, I am who I am because of these gentlemen.

### *Cassian Soltykevych*

My family and a few close friends in my life. They're the ones who tell me to try something different, that it's ok to fail, and to provide constructive feedback (things look a lot better because of them).

### *Dominika Koziak*

Both of my grandmothers were artists, and as a child I loved to copy their paintings and drawings. As any child, when I was finished I would proudly show my mother what I had drawn. I started my first art lesson with a local female artist, who mentored me from seven years old all the way to my first degree in Fine Arts. All these women encouraged me, supported me, and influenced me to become an artist.

### *Emily Belke*

Doug Rachinski has been a huge influence in my dancing, he not only got me hooked on Ukrainian Dance but he helped facilitate my love



of teaching. I am also heavily influenced by Mykola Kanevets; he has been an amazing mentor to me as I grow as an instructor.

### *Ileanna Cheladyn*

The people who have influenced my creative practice and pursuits include most of my teachers from childhood to the present. From elementary dance classes that encouraged us to move as we wished, to my Ukrainian dance teachers and choreographers. Then there are all my professors at the University who have convinced me of the validity in merging academics and performance. More than anything, those I surround myself with are my greatest influences.

### *Joyanne Rudiak*

Anything creative that I've wanted to do has been because of people within my family who are creative: I wanted to study Ukrainian dance because of my uncle; I wanted to learn piano because of my Tato; I wanted to be part of a choir because of my Mama; I wanted to be a storyteller because of my Baba.

### *Kasia Brytan*

My family is my main influence. I have grown up around arts and Ukrainian culture my entire life. They were the ones who supported my decision to pursue drama in high school and university. And thanks to them, I graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Drama, specializing in Technical Theatre - Stage Management from the University of Alberta.

### *Larissa Pohoreski*

Growing up, I remember drawing every single day. My mom enrolled me in a painting workshop with Larisa Sembaliuk-Cheladyn. From that first class, she has been a major presence in my life, and continues to be a mentor to me today. I'm also drawn towards groups like the Lemon Bucket Orchestra who aren't afraid to push boundaries and talk about past/present social issues.

### *Lianna Makuch*

My family has been instrumental in supporting my artistic pursuits, both indirectly and directly.

Blood of Our Soil is inspired by the true accounts of my grandmothers, both of whom were born in Ukraine in the 1920s and immigrated to Canada after the second World War. They, together with my parents, raised me with a strong consciousness of my heritage.

Also influential in my development as a creator, during my acting training I had the unique opportunity to work as the performer apprentice with renowned Canadian clown-duo, Mump & Smoot and their original creation, Mump & Smoot CRACKED. The opportunity to witness their creative process first-hand was profoundly influential in my development as a theatre artist.

### *Michael V. Sulyma*

There are so many people that have influenced my artistic pursuits. My dad. He got me involved with Ukrainian dancing and the performing arts at a young age and has supported me through every aspect of my artistic career giving me guidance, opportunities, and most importantly, love. Another would be Linette Smith; she is the department head of the performing arts at Strathcona High School and has been my teacher/director through my high school performing arts experience. Without her, I would not be the same artist I am today. And then there is Jordan Mah, a former Shumka dancer and Strathcona alumnist. He is my role model not only as an artist, but as a person, too.

### *Michael Wowk*

Past dance instructors, my parents, and grandparents have had the biggest impact on my artistic pursuits. Seeing the effort they have put into raising me and immersing me in the Ukrainian culture has influenced me. From them, I have learned the importance and the value of fostering Ukrainian culture.

### *Murray Steele*

There are so many individuals who have influenced me as a dancer and dance instructor. I will mention my first dance instructor, Doug Rachinski. He has been my mentor in the dance world for the past 24 years. He trained me as a dancer as well as a dance instructor and taught me to never settle for anything less than perfection in the dance studio. His passion for Ukrainian dance has made me just as passionate. I would not be where I am today without Doug Rachinski.

### *Myroslava Oksentiuk*

I came from Ukraine several years ago and was always curious about traditional Ukrainian arts, music and culture. I always took part in different folklore events in Kyiv and sang with the folk group Rozhanytsia



NAMISHA HLUS | PHOTO BY: LARYSA LUCIW

## ON THE COVER

where we researched music, rituals and traditions along with dances. I worked at the Honchar Museum and conducted workshops and excursions in the Kozak Village of Mamayeva Sloboda.

### *Namisha Hlus*

There are so many people who have influenced my singing. This starts with my teachers Pani Danchuk and Pani Fialka for not only letting me join the St. Matthew's Elementary School Choir early but also allowing me to sing descants and higher parts before I was in Grade four. Elizabeth Anderson set me up with my first voice lesson when I was in Grade seven with two classical singers from Switzerland. Melanie Turgeon introduced me to the King's University. This is where I started getting formal training in a Bachelor of Music in voice performance, singing with the Chamber Choir and choral conducting. It was here that I really realized the gift I was given. Training with Melanie, Merla Aikman and Jihwan Cho gave me the technique and knowledge to apply all that I learned to what I am doing today. There were and are so many others who support and encourage me to never give up my passion, the most important being my family.

### *Olesia Markevych*

Mostly other people who love what they do. A former nanny and Joyce Sirski-Howell who taught me to embroider. My parents who love to sing. Zhenia Bahri, Volya's artistic director.

### *Rebecca Kassian (Posthumous Award)*



Besides her family that inspired her, Becky was influenced strongly by the many artistic directors that encouraged her love of Ukrainian dance over the years. Of all the artistic influences in her life, Becky was most influenced by Trish Kushniruk who was her dance teacher in the Thorhild Ukrainian Dance Club for several years and called on Becky in early 2011 to come to Vohon, after she moved to Edmonton to pursue post-secondary education in the fall of 2010.

STEPHANIE BAHNIUK  
PHOTO PROVIDED



MICHAEL WOWK | PHOTO BY: LARYSA LUCIW

### *Stephan Bociurkiw*

My mother, a professional portrait and graphic artist, encouraged me to pursue art from an early age. Cheremosh Artistic Director, Mykola Kanevets' passion for Ukrainian Dance has also influenced me to continue pursuing this art form.

### *Stephania Romaniuk*

Many people have made a significant impact on my life, but one of my greatest influences has been my current voice teacher. With her poetic yet disciplined approach, she opened for me the world of Bel Canto, the great singers of the past, and the nobility and depth of the classical music tradition. She taught me to rely on the bedrock of this "old school" technique, to hone one's kinesthetic-aural awareness ("hear-feeling"), the notion of ethics in music, and that making music is an act of generosity and love, in tribute to the composer and humanity. My рідна школа teacher in Calgary, Hanya Jakymiw, is also a great inspiration. I think of her particularly when I work with children in performance.

### *Stephanie Bahniuk*

I don't think I would be in my current path without my high school drama teacher, Dustin Maloney. He saw something in me that I didn't know existed when he assigned me the role of costume designer for a production of Romeo and Juliet in Grade 11. I fell in love with the craft and have never looked back.

I was incredibly lucky to spend three summers in the costume shop at Williamstown Theatre Festival in Massachusetts. I had the opportunity to work with some amazing designers including Jane Greenwood, Jessica Pabst, Lydia Fine and Gregory Gale. Each of these artists gave me a new and exciting perspective on costume design and inspired me to continue to pursue bigger and better things in the field. I also have to give credit to the Costume Shop Manager, Benjamin Zawacki, who took a chance on me as a young student with almost no experience and continued to give me unbelievable opportunities when I began working at Williamstown.

### *Tamara Soltykevych*

My Grade six teacher who told me she believed I would write a book one day. My high school English teacher who was simply incredibly supportive of me with my writing. My dance instructor from whom I learned that I

had to work, work, work to get better — nothing would just get handed to me — and helped me build a thicker skin as a result. My dad who works harder than any person I know because he loves what he does. My mom because of how much pride she takes in being Ukrainian. My favourite authors: Ken Follett, J.K. Rowling, Stuart McLean, to name a few!

### *Tanya Chumak*

When I was training at the School of Alberta Ballet, my teachers helped me build a strong base of technique and supported me in following a career in ballet. Now that I am in a professional company my directors and artistic staff have pushed me to continuously strive for excellence. They are constantly pushing me to grow as a dancer and give me the confidence to succeed.

### *Tanya Pacholok*

I have been influenced by many mentors over the years, including university professors, colleagues, and my family. Growing up in a musical family has supported my artistic pursuits.

### *Tatiana Cheladyn*

So many people! All of my teachers in one way or another. Also, my parents and sister. I grew up in a very artistic household and we talk about art all the time. My mom is a well-known visual artist and my sister also dances. If it wasn't for my family, I probably would not have pursued a career in the arts.

## A.L. HORTON SCHOOL UKRAINIAN BILINGUAL PROGRAM

### *What was the purpose of the project?*

In 2017, Ukrainians across the country celebrated 125 years of Ukrainian settlement and immigration to Canada. This is a significant anniversary for Ukrainians, as they have helped shape Canada's cultural mosaic. The teachers in the bilingual program at A.L. Horton School wanted to commemorate this significant anniversary with the students in the bilingual program in a special way. The idea for the project came to the teachers in the bilingual program and they commissioned Larisa Sembaliuk Cheladyn to work with the students to create a legacy art project.

### *Who participated in this project?*

The students in the Ukrainian Bilingual Program at A.L. Horton School participated in this project. Students from all grades participated, from Kindergarden to Grade Six, which is approximately 120 students. Larisa Sembaliuk Cheladyn was the artist that was commissioned to work with the students on this project and guide them to create a legacy art project.

### *How did the Ukrainian heritage of the participants influence the project?*

Larisa came up with the idea to have each student create a mosaic tile that would represent one of the four seasons. Larisa helped the students to brainstorm ideas with each of the classes in the bilingual program that participated through discussions and illustrations that



Larisa showed them. Together, the students came up with their own idea and they illustrated their idea on their mosaic tile. The theme of each tile had to represent one of the four seasons and how the student thought that season represented Ukrainian art, culture, or heritage.

The students in the bilingual program have been exposed to Ukrainian cultural and heritage throughout much of their education. Larisa led the discussions with the students about the four seasons and how each season could represent Ukrainian art, culture, and heritage. The students easily identified how the four seasons could be illustrated on their mosaic tile to represent Ukrainian culture; they were able to draw from their experiences and illustrated beautiful tiles.

### *Where is the mosaic displayed?*

The tiles have been mounted to create a beautiful mosaic that will be displayed across from the library at A.L. Horton School. The teachers decided that this would be the most fitting place to display the art project because the library represents a gathering or meeting place for students, as well as, staff and parents.





**Братство Українців  
Католиків – Канади**

**Управа Едмонтонської  
Єпархії**

**Brotherhood of Ukrainian  
Catholics in Canada**

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*The Ukrainian Catholic Brotherhood of Canada - Edmonton Eparchy  
works to maintain our Catholic Faith, Ukrainian Culture, Canadian  
Citizenship, and Social Development in our community.*

I would like to express heartfelt congratulations to ACUA on their 30th Anniversary, for the confidence and encouragement to proudly recognize the emerging artists in province of Alberta with their Top 30 Under 30 Program . On behalf of myself and the executive, a big THANK YOU for the leadership by Deborah Stasiuk , President of ACUA, the Executive and staff for the vision of The Present, The Future, and Today of Ukrainian Arts by this worthy vibrant ACUA Organization.

It was a honour to be involved in this celebration with ACUA and present certificates and the a monetary donation to each recipient from The Brotherhood . Great job by everyone, wishing ACUA the best in the coming years ahead.

**BLESSINGS TO ALL!**

**Orest Boychuk ,  
UCBC NATIONAL & EDMONTON EPARCHY PRESIDENT**



# 840 CFCW

THE

# Z



# ABAVA

PROGRAM



with

# Steven Chwok

Sundays

7:00pm - 9:00pm





## Gallery & Artisan Boutique

Unique & original pieces of art  
and artisan crafts for sale

## Fine & Folk Art Workshop Series

Instruction from master fine and folk  
artists & you take your project home

## Signature Artist Series

Monthly special art exhibits by Alberta  
Ukrainian fine and folk artists

## Programs and Services

Artist Directory, ACUA Vitae, Information &  
Referrals, Community Space for  
Rent, Scholarships

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## SUPPORT UKRAINIAN ARTS - JOIN ACUA

- ☐ I would like to become a member.
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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Organizational Membership \$50/year**

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Please make cheques payable to ACUA. Visa and MC  
payment can be called into the office during office  
hours, 780.488.8558.

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Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ I give permission to publish my  
name on the donor gratitude list

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you will receive:**

- ACUA Vitae Ukrainian arts  
and culture magazine
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newsletter informing members  
of the people, places, and  
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Ukrainian arts community
- Invitations to openings  
and events
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education courses
- Access to artist workshops
- Discounts at supporting  
community businesses