

St. John's Ukrainian Orthodox Choir

presents the first in a series of

CHORAL CONCERTS

Masonic Temple

Edmonton

Thursday November 24th, 1949

George Bilashevich

CONDUCTOR



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UKRAINIAN SONG

"History has been cruel to the Ukrainians, crushing out their liberties and glories," wrote the eminent Canadian scholar and poet, Prof. Watson Kirkconnell, "but the pent-up emotions of a thousand years, the passion of freedom, the poignancy of broken hearts, the tears of joy at the beauty of spring and love and the nightingale's voice—these have gushed forth in songs that are worthy of living forever."

In Ukrainian song can be found a happy spirit and optimism thoroughly saturated with love of freedom. The Ukrainian songs developed under the influence of powerful political events — (wars with the Tartars, Turks, Russians and Poles) — and drew its strength from the ancient ritualistic songs, ballads and dances.

It is in a-cappella singing that the Ukraine has been most noted since the 16th century. The fact that compositions of that time were for four to twenty-four voices, testifies to the high development of this art.

THE CHOIR MASTER

Mr. George Bilashevich was born in Western Ukraine, the son of a clergyman. Very early in his life, his family moved to a district on the outskirts of Kiev, where he received his early schooling. After completing a course in choral conducting at the Kiev Conservatory, Mr. Bilashevich soon became one of the few choir masters of Opera Kiev. During the Second World War, he was conscripted by the Germans to work as a slave-laborer in Germany until he was liberated by the allied armies at the conclusion of hostilities. In the Displaced Persons camps he organized and led many choirs of which the most famous was the Ukrainian Male Chorus "TREMBITA". Upon the advice of the Ukrainian Orthodox Archbishop of Canada, His Grace Mtyslav Skrypnyk, the Edmonton parish brought Mr. Bilashevich to this city where he has made his home. He is the permanent choir conductor of the Ukrainian Orthodox Parish of St. John.

Programme

"GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST".....STROKIN

"Слава Богові на Небі"

The hymn of the angels announcing the birth of Christ.
It is also the opening hymn in the Orthodox early mass.

"TO THE HOLY VIRGIN".....ARCHANGELSKY

"До Богородиці"

This prayer, honoring the Holy Virgin, asks Her to
pray in our behalf to Jesus, Her Son, to forgive our sins.

"HYMN OF THE CHERUBIM" (No. 7) — BORTNIANSKY

"Херувимська" (Ч. 7)

Bortniansky, a Ukrainian who studied in Leningrad,
composed many different Hymns of the Cherubim of
which his seventh is one of the most famous. This hymn
forms part of the Orthodox liturgy.

"THE LORD'S PRAYER".....DAVIDOWSKY

"Отче Наш"

(Soloist: Miss Helen Mysak)

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Programme

"THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT".....PANCHENKO

"У Царстві Твоім"

One of the liturgical songs of the Orthodox church.
It recites the eight beatitudes.

"NOW THOU DOST DISMISS THY SERVANT".....
DAVIDOWSKY

"Нині Відпускаєш"

(Soloist: Olga Orrell)

Simeon's prayer at the time of presentation of Jesus
in the Temple of Jerusalem.

"LORD, HEAR MY PRAYER".....ARCHANGELSKY

"Господи, Почуй Молитву Мою"

(Soloist: Ernest Chrastawka)

"THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON".....HRYHORIYEV

"Слава Єдинородний"

The second antiphon from the Holy Mass.

— INTERMISSION —

Accompanist - - - Mrs. Walter Maday

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Programme

"ONCE THERE WAS FREEDOM".....DEMUTSKY

"Гей Колись Була Роскіш, Воля"

Typical of many cossack songs are the slurs and open vowels with which it is sung. This is a reminiscent song about a cossack who will never return from battle.

"COSSACK SONG" LYSENKO

"Ой Гай, Мати"

Lysenko, the father of Ukrainian music, arranged this folk song about a young cossack, unafraid of death, who regrets leaving his loved-one behind.

"A COSSACK'S LAMENT" LUDKEWICH

"Іхав Стрілець"

There is an old Ukrainian custom of giving a young warrior a 'kerchief by his loved-one, and in the event of his death, it is to be placed over his eyes. This is a folk song about just such an event.

"SICHOVYI STRILTSI" LEONTOVICH

"Гей Ви Стрільці"

The "Sichoviy Striltsi" were the Ukrainian Army of Liberation in 1919. They won their freedom, but only for a short while, when the Bolshevik armies over-ran their country. This is a gay battle-song in march tempo.

"THE AWAKENING" NEDILSKY

"Засяло Сонце Золоте"

A Ukrainian National March, closely resembling the arrangement of a brass band. The theme describes a nation awakening to defend its homeland.

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Programme

"THE SPINNING SONG" LEONTOVICH
"Пряла"

Leontovich was a master of arranging folk songs, carried down through generations. He displays one of his best-liked arrangements in a simple song of a young wife, grudgingly tolerating her in-laws, but eagerly waiting for her husband's return from the fields.

"DAUGHTER'S MISFORTUNE" LEONTOVICH
"Мала Мати Одну Дочку"

The Ukrainians have an old tradition, that if they bathe their children in certain herbs, they will grow up lucky and immune to misfortune. This song is about this superstition — a mother had only one daughter and bathed her in herbs. Eventually the girl marries a drunkard, who abuses and beats her; the superstition is discredited.

"THE MINSTREL SONG" LEONTOVICH
"Дударик"

This folk song is about an old minstrel, who used to play a flute, keeping his whole village amused with his music. When he died, all was gone, but the flute. No one could play it because no one took the trouble to learn the art from the old minstrel.

"WHEN I GROW UP" KOZITSKY
"Ой, Дуб, Дуба"
A comic love song.

"MONDAY MORN" LEONTOVICH
"Ой Устану Я в Понеділок"

This comical folk song is about a young widow, who does nothing all week except have a gay time with her friends in the pub — waiting only for Sunday, when she can get her weekly rest.

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