

# Concert explores 'Mountains, Valleys & Steppes'

Doreen Zawadziwsky believes in promoting Ukrainian talent. When Zawadziwsky first met Livonia Symphony Orchestra conductor Volodymyr Schesniuk at St. Josephat Ukrainian Catholic Church in Warren more than four years ago, his credentials as a musician in Ukraine impressed her so much that she helped him write a resume.

Schesniuk, choir director at St. Josephat, conducted the Krysztan State Opera and Ballet Theater and Lviv Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra, and was conductor-in-residence for the Bolshoi Theater and Kremlin Palace of the former U.S.S.R. before immigrating to the United States in 1991.

Schesniuk, in turn, was impressed with Zawadziwsky's devotion to classical music and asked her to join the Livonia Symphony's board of directors. Now, the two have planned a program to introduce Ukrainian music to the community. The final concert of the Livonia Symphony's 1997-98 season showcases Ukraine's music, rich in the legends of the rolling steppes and the Carpathian Mountains, and pays tribute to the beauty of the country's rivers, vitality of its folk songs and ballads, and skill of the Cossack riders.

"The Ukrainian community is very proud of its musical heritage and would like to present it to the Detroit area," said Zawadziwsky, a Rochester Hills resident. "We are also proud to have such a talented musician as Maestro Volodymyr Schesniuk in our community."

When Schesniuk approached the Livonia Symphony board of directors with the idea for the concert last year, he originally



Christina Romana Lypeckyz



Marko Farion

wanted it to take place in Warren, the heart of the Ukrainian community in the metro Detroit area. Overruled on the location but undaunted, Schesniuk simply reassessed the way in which he would seek the Ukrainian community's support. In March of 1997, then Livonia Symphony Society president Betty Jean Awrey sent a letter to Ukrainian community organizations asking for help in funding the concert. From that letter the Committee in Support of Ukraine's Musical Heritage of Metropolitan Detroit was formed. So far, about \$6,000 has been raised for the concert estimated to cost \$12,000.

Among those donating funds are the Ukrainian Self Reliance Credit Union, Ukrainian Cultural Center, Ukrainian Future Credit Union, Market-Max America Realty, Ukrainian Folk Dance Ensemble, Ukrainian

American Center, Ukrainian National Women's League (branch 58), and tool and manufacturing companies. "The concert is a way to show the American people our music heritage," said Zawadziwsky. "The Ukrainian community is working hard selling tickets and trying to help Volodymyr Schesniuk, one of our Ukrainian musicians."

## Ukrainian music by Ukrainians

Since his arrival in the area in 1991, Schesniuk has come into contact with many Ukrainian musicians. Two of the vocalists are guest artists on the program: mezzo-soprano Christina Romana Lypeckyz and baritone Jerome Cisaruk who sing a duet, "Cossack Beyond the Danube." Schesniuk knew pianist Volodymyr Vynnytsky when both

lived in Lviv, Ukraine. Vynnytsky, who moved to New York in 1991, plays Tchaikovsky's "Piano Concerto No. 1." Vynnytsky studied at the Lviv Music School for Gifted Children and later the Moscow Conservatory. After earning a doctorate degree in 1983 from the Moscow Conservatory, he taught at the Kiev Conservatory. Vynnytsky has performed with leading orchestras of Ukraine and Poland and at Carnegie Hall. His list of recordings includes works by Mozart, Bartok, Chopin and Liszt for Kobza Productions (Kiev-Toronto, 1988), modern Ukrainian composer Myroslav Skoryk for Yovshan Records (Montreal), and archival recordings of Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto and Britten's "Young Apollo" concerto for the Ukrainian Broadcasting Corp. (Kiev).

"It will be like theater on stage," said Schesniuk. "For the opening composition I would like to show a Ukrainian pianist, the winner of many competitions in Paris, playing a piece that everybody knows. After intermission, there will be different kinds of Ukrainian music. I chose some very modern music, like 'Orestia' by an award-winning composer. It's a new experience for the audience. It's melodrama. It's the first time performed here but has been performed at festivals in Europe."

Troy dentist Marko Farion, a leading authority on Ukrainian minstrel and oral traditions, will narrate Olexander Kozarenko's "Orestia." Dr. Farion appeared with the LSO in 1995 performing on the bandura, a string instrument which is a cross between the lute and harp. He's played with the Ukrainian Bandurist

Chorus of North America, which

## Mountains, Valleys & Steppes

What: A concert recognizing Ukrainian musical heritage from the rolling steppes to the Carpathian Mountains.

When: 7:30 p.m. Saturday, May 30.

Where: Churchill High School, 8900 Newburgh, (north of Joy Road), Livonia.

Cost: \$12.50, \$25 sponsorship tickets, and available by calling (248) 645-6666/(734) 422-1111/(248) 656-0306 at the Livonia Civic Center Library, 32777 Five Mile Road, (east of Farmington Road).

won the Taras Shevchenko State Award for musical achievement (Ukraine's highest cultural honor), for more than 20 years. He is also a bass soloist with the Detroit Concert Choir, winner of "Choir of the World" in Wales in 1996 and with the St. Josephat Ukrainian Catholic Church choir.

"There's a lot of music from Ukraine that's good classical music that's known in Eastern Europe that's unknown in this country and that's why this concert is important," said Dr. Farion. "Orestia" is very modern. It was written in Ukraine. As a bandurist, I know early minstrels told the oral form of a story that taught common folk the history. This is a Greek tragedy and takes a step further back in time."

Romana Lypeckyz, who sings

"Cossack Beyond the Danube" with baritone Jerome Cisaruk, was born in Ukraine. She moved to Germany as a child and studied piano and voice with husband and wife Ukrainian musicians Zenovia and Zinoviy Lysko. She has appeared in more than 700 concerts and recitals throughout the U.S., Canada, Italy, and Ukraine. She has sung with the Michigan Opera Theatre, Michigan Lyric Opera, Verdii Opera Theatre of Michigan, and the Livonia, Bloomfield Hills, Pontiac, Dearborn, and Warren symphony orchestras.

Cisaruk was also born in Ukraine. He left as a child and at the end of World War II settled with his parents in a displaced persons' camp in Germany. He has been a member of the Ukrainian Bandurist Chorus since 1971. Cisaruk began voice training at Oakland University in Rochester where he received a scholarship to study with Cesare Baronec, formerly a leading bass with Milan's La Scala. He has also appeared as a bass soloist with the LSO and Schoolcraft Community Choir and sung with the Michigan Opera Theatre and Detroit Symphony Chorus.

"Cossack Beyond the Danube" is classical music, opera buffa, drama with comedy," said Schesniuk. "It's a historical moment when Cossacks went beyond the Danube."

Also on the program are "Hutsula Pictures" by Skoryk and "Holiday" from Carpathian Rhapsody by Levko Kolodub.

"Holiday is the great finale with rich orchestration," said Schesniuk. "It's the folklore of Carpathian people."

# DSO completes tour in Neeme Jarvi's hometown

(This is the last in a series of diary reports on the Detroit Symphony Orchestra's European tour)

BY ERVIN MONROE  
PRINCIPAL FLUTIST, DSO

**Day 18 - Thursday, May 14:** We are on our way to the "Motor City of Europe," Stuttgart, Germany. We left our hotel in Düsseldorf and arrived at the airport in a timely fashion.

Stuttgart's concert hall, the Liederhalle, has a striking interior. Lush blue decor is punctuated by a balcony that spirals around the hall and sweeps down to the main floor on one side. Piccoloist Jeffrey Zeck, of Royal Oak, described it like this: "It's like playing inside a wedding cake!" The concert went extremely well. After one of our soft melodic encores, I heard a lady in the front section sigh and utter "schöön," meaning "pretty." A number of Chrysler representatives from Detroit were in Stuttgart and attended our performance. As in Detroit, this city was buzzing with the news of the Daimler-Benz and Chrysler merger.

**Day 19 - Friday, May 15:** Today we leave Europe's motor capital, and travel to Europe's

arts and music capital, Vienna, Austria. It's a travel day with no evening concert, and we are anxious to get on route. Boarding the plane was not easy, and the long line of musicians in the rather warm access tunnel barely moved. The mooring and bailing started, along with a lot of laughter, and a competition of a sort ensued. We had a "moo-off" and a "baa-off," but orchestra members did not fare well. Leslie Dunner, our resident conductor, easily won the "moo" category, and Jill Woodward, public relations director, was voted the best "baa-er."

**Day 20 - Saturday, May 16:** We finally arrived in Vienna, a truly amazing city. We have until 7:30 p.m. this evening to soak up the sights and sounds of the "city of Mozart." Everywhere we turn, there's another concert hall, museum, park, or stunning architectural wonder.

We performed at the Konzerthaus which was located a block from our hotel.

The Konzerthaus is a resonant hall in a classic style. The balcony comes down both sides of the hall and big pillars rise from the balcony to the ceiling. We played several encores for the appreciative crowd.

**Day 21 - Sunday, May 17:** We are all excited about going to Prague, capital of the Czech Republic. This will be the first time the Detroit Symphony Orchestra has played in one of the countries previously behind the Iron Curtain. We are scheduled to fly with Czech Airlines and are bussed from the terminal to the aircraft. Bogos Mortchikian, violinist from Livonia, is standing next to me on the shuttle. "It's an old Russian jet," he growled when the plane came in sight. He knew from personal experience, as he defected from a Russian orchestra while on tour in the late '60s. We barely had time to check into our Prague hotel before departure time for the concert. It was interesting to note that there is no shortage of labor here. We had many attendants during dinner, and now have a tour guide for each bus ride. Our visit to the Czech Republic reveals many outstanding architectural landmarks, but also a struggling and impoverished country.

The inner city of Prague is extraordinarily beautiful and under ongoing restoration, but the larger part of the city is fairly

depressing.

Prague's recently restored Art Nouveau concert hall is breathtaking, with vaulted ceilings, recessed decorative lighting, sculptures on each side of the stage - and great acoustics. We rise to the challenge of the day and give one of our best concerts so far. The audience responds accordingly, clapping along with our encore, the "Stars and Stripes."

**Day 22 - Monday, May 18:** We are on our way to Budapest, Hungary. When we arrive, we have only a few hours to sightsee or nap. I joined the nappers as the previous day had been strenuous. Our concert is in a new auditorium next to the hotel. It is a pleasant-sounding room, lined in wood designs of different shades. We were honored to count the President of Hungary among the audience.

**Day 23 - Tuesday, May 19:** The DSO concludes its month-long tour in Tallinn, Estonia, hometown of our Maestro, Neeme Jarvi. Prior to arriving at our final destination, we found a money exchange at the airport that would take all of the left-over currencies we had from the many countries. I traded a

stack of pounds, pesetas, forints and marks for good old-fashioned American greenbacks.

Estonia is a tiny country, self-governed since 1990, when Soviet occupation finally came to an end. The orchestra has been booked into the Hotel Viru, the only hotel in Tallinn that was open to foreigners throughout its repressive history. The story told to us is that when a Finnish businessman bought it and began a restoration, they had to remove all manner of listening devices from the walls.

Our concert is at 7 p.m. and we walk to the hall through a park square. The hall is very small, with a light colored interior accented by delicate plasterwork. Columns rise from the balcony much like the Konzerthaus in Vienna. Our performance was very moving, beginning with the national anthems of the United States and Estonia. The cameras of Estonian Television were positioned everywhere to record these historic concerts.

**Day 25 - Wednesday, May 20:** Today we fell in love with Tallinn. The Old Town, as they call it, is only blocks from our hotel and it is enchanting. Our first impression of the city (which during our drive from the airport appeared drab and uninteresting) is now reversed. The people are very friendly and the shops are full of handmade items of all descriptions.

A very tired but happy orchestra played our final concert. Marcus Schoon, bassoonist from Troy, told me in the hallway, "I feel I can finally relax. Every day of touring is intense. One even goes to sleep thinking about tomorrow's travel and performance. I can feel my body unwinding already."

Following the concert, we were treated to a fine dinner party by Maestro Jarvi and Mrs. Jarvi. We go home carrying with us wonderful memories of this tour. Home sounds really good.

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