

# ACUA VITAE

An abstract painting of a face, rendered in a style reminiscent of Vincent van Gogh's 'Owl' or 'Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear'. The face is composed of thick, expressive brushstrokes in a palette of warm reds, oranges, yellows, and browns, set against a background of cooler blues and greens. The overall effect is one of intense emotion and dynamic movement.

Summer 2008 | Volume 15, Number 1

Alberta's Ukrainian Arts and Culture Magazine

Art, Culture,  
and a New Generation

The Bandura: A Brief History   Bohdan Tarasenko   Barvy Art Studio

A PUBLICATION OF THE ALBERTA COUNCIL FOR THE UKRAINIAN ARTS





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# ACUAVITAE

Summer 2008

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PHOTO CREDIT: DR. A. HORNJATKEVYC



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PHOTO CREDIT: B. TARASENKO

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Cover Image:  
Old Hutsul, acrylic, 9x12, 2008

ARTIST: VALERIY SEMENKO





**S**ummer. Already I feel a reprieve from the daily hustle and bustle of work and life. As I finish up the preparation of

this issue of ACUA Vitae, I begin to think about my summer days. I'm hopeless at planning holidays. It's not that I don't want to get away, but I'm not a planner. I prefer the last minute getaway and when I'm off I try to savour every chance moment I get. But my three small children have changed things for me. Now I'm forced to find a new balance between impulsive and planner.

The hammock calls, and I can't wait for the lazy afternoon spent under the apple tree reading Marina Lewycka's *Strawberry Fields*. Check out Elena Scharabun's list of recommended reading for more great books available at the Ukrainian Bookstore.

But not all of my summer days will be lazy ones. The kids don't allow for that. We'll also take in some of the great festivals around the province. If you get an opportunity, check out Ukrainian Days at the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village in August... ACUA will be there with drop in workshop opportunities for everyone, and a wonderful artist exhibition to view.

Balance is something I struggle with

on a daily basis. But it's a good struggle because I'm forced to face my challenges and the reward is the sense of peace and joy in all the little things that I accomplish. Working on ACUA Vitae is always a combination of fun, hard work, and the struggle for balance. In this issue of ACUA Vitae, Dr. Andriy Hornjatkevyc shares with us an excerpt from one of his presentations on the bandura – an instrument of great legacy to Ukrainian culture. Balancing out our cultural history lesson, Naomi Lewis connects us with emerging playwright, Bohdan Tarasenko, and Ukrainian visual artists Valeriy Semenko and Iryna Karpenko chat about how they got started with art, and the inspiration for Barvy Studio.

It takes dedication, hard work, and a sharing of ideas to make each issue happen. Thank you to our contributors for your time, effort, and input. Our goal is to engage our readers with Ukrainian cultural arts and to present fresh perspectives from our artistic community. I hope you, our members, find this issue fresh and inspiring. If you're not a member, I hope you too enjoy this issue and consider becoming a member of ACUA. We need to support arts and culture in this province and we need to preserve our Ukrainian cultural heritage. Enjoy!

*Andrea Kopylech, ACUA*

# ACUAVITAE

Alberta's Ukrainian Arts and Culture Magazine

Summer 2008 Volume 15, Number 1

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*Art Direction:* jellyfish design

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Sunflower, detail  
Barvy Studio student work

## Community Donations

Over the last year the Ukrainian Canadian Archives and Museum of Alberta (UCAMA) has received two significant donations. The Koziak Family Foundation have chosen to honour their parents, John H. and Marie Koziak, by sponsoring the Founders' Room with a \$200,000 donation. The Founders' Room will permanently carry the Koziak name in lasting tribute to their parents' love of Ukrainian culture and their contribution to the development of Edmonton and Alberta.

The family of retired engineer Ed Chwyl of Victoria has purchased the naming opportunity for UCAMA's new library, to be named the Chwyl Family Library, with a donation of \$750,000. A modest man with strong Christian values, Chwyl describes himself as a spiritual traditionalist. "Yes, always strive to do your best, but also acknowledge that your success depends more on elements out of your control than it does on you. Timing, luck, and divine intervention trump personal achievements every time." He is grateful for the years of support and encouragement he received from the entire Chwyl family and for this reason, he says that "calling it the Chwyl Family Library is most apropos."

UCAMA is also pleased that Promin Sport, a part of the League of Ukrainian Canadians, allocated the door proceeds of the Klitschko/Ibragimov boxing match for our new museum project. UCAMA collected over \$1,000 toward the capital campaign and is grateful for this show of community support.

Groups or individuals who wish to contribute to the building of the new museum should contact UCAMA at (780) 424-7580.

## Ukrainian Day Festival! Sunday, August 10, 2008

Join us in a celebration of our Ukrainian roots and heritage at Ukrainian Day 2008 at the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village! Every summer, thousands of people gather for the annual festival. Families from all across east-central Alberta along with tourists and the general public gather for a day to celebrate all things Ukrainian. Hosted by the Ukrainian Canadian Congress in Alberta, Ukrainian Day is a perfect event for the whole family, with events for both young and old.

The festival draws an audience of over 5000 spectators and feature many annual attractions including Centenary Pioneers recognition, church services, tours of the historic site, a Taste of Ukraine food festival,

market, art exhibits, and an exciting cultural concert on the bandshell stage. This year's performers will include Shumka & new Edmonton bands Euphoria and Zorepad! New events this year include interactive craft displays, face painting for children, old-fashioned games, and a chance to kick up your heels and dance!

ACUA will also be featuring a special area of activity by members who will provide hands-on opportunities for young and old to try your hand at various forms of art and creativity.

For more information and updates on Ukrainian Day, please visit our website at [www.uccab.ca](http://www.uccab.ca) or please call 780-414-1624.

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*Pavlo Suprun, bandurist, on the square in front of St. Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery in Kiev. Suprun was blinded in his childhood by a grenade during WW2. He earns part of his living by performing in this square on Sunday afternoons.*

PHOTO CREDIT: DR. A. HORNJATKEVYC



# The Bandura: A Brief History

From a presentation by Dr. Andrij Hornjatkevyc

**I**n the Ukraine, and in the Canadian Ukrainian community, the asymmetrical bandura is a cultural icon – a veritable emblem of a nation and its culture. But the bandura's history is long and treacherous; in fact, in the late nineteenth century, the instrument was on the verge of extinction. Bandurists struggled through political oppression, imprisonment, and even attempts on their lives to bring their beloved instrument through the centuries, to the new world, and back to the Ukraine.

The familiar asymmetrical instrument is a modern invention, which evolved from a series of simpler instruments. None of these predecessors remain intact, but they are depicted in paintings. The earliest such image depicts an eleventh-century minstrel whose instrument has several strings stretched over a small pear-shaped body and long neck. He stops the strings with his left hand and plucks with his right.

Sixteenth-century Central and Western Europeans began to experiment with treble strings on lutes, and though these instruments are now preserved only in musical museums and images, the idea of an instrument with treble strings (prystrunky) caught Ukrainian musicians' imaginations and spread like wildfire. As the idea developed, musicians experimented with ever more prystrunky, eventually shifting melody to the treble strings and relying on the bass strings (basky) for accompaniment.

By the eighteenth century, two similar but different instruments co-existed – the bandura and the kobza. Their names were

often used interchangeably, and through the might of Taras Shevchenko's first collection of poems, "Kobzar," Ukrainians became enamoured with both instruments. Historians now agree the kobza was a simpler version of the bandura.

Over the next two hundred years, bandura performance evolved in two distinct schools. Chernihiv musicians held the bandura between their thighs, playing melody with the right hand and accompanying with the left. Kharkiv musicians reversed the hand positions, holding their banduras flat against the chest. The instrument took its place, in the nineteenth century, as an instrument of blind wandering minstrels in Eastern Ukraine.

In 1894, seventeen-year-old Hnat Khotkevych built a bandura with the neck moved to the performer's right, and performers embraced the asymmetrical model almost immediately. Khotkevych went on to gather bandurists and other folk musicians to perform at the 1902 Twelfth Archaeological Conference in Kharkiv – and this was no mean undertaking considering the Russian Empire's severe restriction on Ukrainian language use, including during stage performances. Moreover, most of the bandurists were blind, and each had a different instrument tuned to a different key, which he played with his own idiosyncratic technique. Adding to the complexity, the minstrels were accompanied by violins, a basolia, and a lira (hurdy gurdy). The collective was greeted enthusiastically, but it was a one-time performance, and, afterwards,

everyone went his separate way.

Under Pavlo Skoropadsky's monarchical Hetmanate, Vasyl Yemetz organized the first bandurist chorus, or Cappella. The Kobzar Choir, as they were known, gave their first performance in November, 1918 in Kyiv. The ensemble dispersed when its patron abdicated in December, but was eventually reconstituted under the Soviet regime, and, in 1935, amalgamated with the Poltava Chorus, a group working under Volodymyr Kabachok, with Khotkevych's guidance.

The old-style wandering bandurists were seen as a threat to the regime because of their unruly repertoire; for example, Yehor Movchan's song about forced collectivism and the associated famine spread among the minstrels. The state decided that this music was a serious threat, and, in 1935, summoned wandering bandurists for a conference. The minstrels were all shot, along with their guides. Ironically, Movchan survived only because his guide fell ill before they reached the bloody event.

During the purges of the late 1930s, Khotkevych was executed. Directors of the State Bandurists' Chorus were replaced with disturbing regularity, and artistic continuity suffered. Things were not to improve when Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union in 1941. Although Hryhory Kytasty initially reassembled the bandurists and established the Shevchenko Ukrainian Bandurist Cappella, the Nazis quickly recognized bandura music as a threat and imprisoned the musicians in the Neuengamme concentration camp.

## ...the bandura's history is long and treacherous...

Miraculously, the bandurists were freed, thanks to Ukrainian connections, and the Cappella continued to perform for Ukrainian forced labourers.

After the Second World War, the State Bandurist' Chorus was reconstituted, and the bandura was introduced into conservatory curricula, notably at Kyiv and Lviv; however, an important transformation took place. Hitherto the bandura had been a man's instrument, but now the majority of players were women. Upon graduation, these female musicians formed trios and sometimes larger ensembles, and the repertoire changed dramatically. Bandurists had played the music of rebellion; they had roused people to rise up for their rights and fight their oppressors – but these new collectives played innocuous lyrical and humorous songs that would result in nothing more dramatic than a kiss.

There were virtually no similar men's collectives, except the Ukrainian SSR's State Merited Bandurists' Chorus, and its repertoire was still strictly controlled. Furthermore, the Russia bayan (button accordion) and concert tsymbaly were incorporated into the ensemble and often drowned out all the banduras. There was little room for soloists; the old songs and dumy (epics) fundamental to their repertoire were forbidden.

The Soviet era saw major efforts to transform the bandura from a folk to a chromatic, concert instrument. This was accomplished with the addition of semitone strings that criss-crossed the plane of the fundamental strings. An added crank or lever allowed the musician to retune the instrument from one key to another. Some were delighted with this innovation because it raised the instrument to a higher technical level and let it perform concert music; others saw

this "improvement" as a departure from the instrument's roots. The new technology made it difficult, if not impossible, to perform the bandura's original repertoire.

Khotkevych had introduced the bandura in Western Ukraine when he sought refuge there after the unsuccessful 1905 rebellion – he had performed widely, and, in 1909, published the first bandura manual. Vasyl Yemetz had also brought the bandura west after the failed liberation struggle of 1917-1921. Thus, the bandura became a loved and admired instrument far from its historical homeland. The political constraints there, even during the Second World War, were far less restrictive than the draconian conditions in the Ukrainian SSR, and, as a result, the bandura and its traditional repertoire developed relatively freely in this new territory – talented musicians developed traditions and techniques that were out of the question across the Soviet border.

After 1945, numerous bandurists found themselves in new worlds. Some brought the traditions of Eastern and Central Ukraine, such as Hryhory Bazhul, who taught the Kharkiv method in Australia. Meanwhile, West Ukrainian émigrés brought their tradition to the New York area. The East's Cappella found refuge in displaced persons' camps in the US Occupation Zone, and in 1949, they immigrated to the Detroit area. From there, they gave concerts all over the States, Canada, and later in Central Europe and Australia.

Finally, when Ukraine proclaimed its independence in 1991, its bandurists resumed playing works that had been proscribed for decades, and the old folk "starosvitska" bandura was rediscovered. That year the Cappella went home for a triumphant concert tour.



*Ukraina 2006. Traditional bandura.*

PHOTO CREDIT: DR. A. HORNJATKEVYC

Since 1945, the bandura has come into full force in Australia and North America, including Canada, and it has taken considerable root. Just as the bandura became an iconic instrument in Ukraine, both Soviet and non-Soviet, it has acquired the same status among our communities in these new homes. ■

*A native of Ukraine, Andrij Hornjatkevyc studied the bandura with Volodymyr Yurkevych and Zinoviy Shtokalko in the USA. Later, while living in Canada, Hornjatkevyc has edited and published the latter's A Kobzar Handbook (in both English and Ukrainian), and Kobza, a collection of his musical scores. Hornjatkevyc has performed as a bandurist in Canada, USA, Ukraine and Germany; he has either taught the instrument or given lectures about it in those countries.*

*In 1972, Hornjatkevyc obtained a doctorate in Slavic languages and literatures from the University of California in Berkeley, and has worked in those fields at the University of Alberta until his retirement in 2003.*



# "The Orange Revolution"

By Halya Wilson

The Calgary International Film Festival was founded in 1998 to showcase film works that represent the best of the best from film festivals around the world. In September 2007, two films from Ukraine were showcased, "The Orange Revolution" and "Two in One (Dva v Odnom)" in Ukrainian and Russian.

It was exhilarating to watch the events of the Orange Revolution again. As Ukrainian Canadians we watched daily on television, on the internet and in all the daily newspapers the tension and excitement of the 2004 elections. The documentary captured an in depth look at the events and bravery of the Ukrainian people, the songs, the spirit of this historic moment. Steve York a veteran film maker interviewed not only students on the street but also the man who would become president, Viktor Yushchenko. It gave the viewer a fascinating look at a volatile time in Ukraine, which at the time appealed not only to Ukrainians beyond the borders but to the world at large. Some of the Ukrainians attending the film felt more could have been said about the support from the diaspora and the political influences from the west. Perhaps that would be a different film with a distinct approach to this subject.

Steve York (producer/director) began tracking Ukraine's presidential campaign in the summer of 2004. Having produced his first film, *A Force More Powerful* in 1999 about successful nonviolent revolutions which was expanded into a three-hour television series for air on PBS, he was nominated for an Emmy. York boarded a flight to Kyiv and headed straight to the tent city in Independence Square, known as the Maidan, with only a small digital camera and began filming. York ended up making 5 trips to Ukraine and then with Joe Wiedenmayer (editor) they screened more than 300 hours of material and wove

together the inside story of the Orange Revolution. From the beginning, their goal was to let the story tell itself: no narration, just the words, the music, and the pictures of the unprecedented events which unfolded in Ukraine in late 2004. The film has been shown in all the major cities of

Canada and the U.S. where film festivals are held with rave reviews. A film about the search for democracy can't disappoint. ■

*Halya Wilson is a freelance reviewer and an active member of the Ukrainian arts community in Alberta. She lives in Calgary.*





A woman in traditional Ukrainian folk costume, including a headscarf and a dark vest over a patterned blouse, is holding a large metal bowl. She is standing in front of a rustic wooden structure, possibly a fence or a wall made of logs. The image has a blue tint.

Edmonton Playwright

# Bohdan Tarasenko

finds old-country folklore and new-fangled magic on the prairies

*By Naomi Lewis*



**B**ohdan Tarasenko's Ukrainian family moved from Yugoslavia to Alberta when he was almost two years old and, though he never lived in a sod house on the prairies, his childhood was permeated by folklore and mythology. It's no surprise, then, to find Ukrainian and prairie-immigrant imagery informing Tarasenko's recent plays – even as he twists and reshapes the traditional into something more contemporary.

Tarasenko completed the University of Alberta drama program in 2005. Since then, he's had two plays, *Folktale* and *House of Sod*, produced professionally; both depict rural Ukrainian families struggling against elements sometimes more super than natural. Throughout university, Tarasenko explains, he directed plays of all sorts, but shied away from Ukrainian themes until his final year, when he wrote *Folktale*. "I had all these experiences stacked up and waiting," he says, "and starting to bottleneck. So I really needed to just get them out."

After graduating, Tarasenko expanded and rewrote *Folktale* for NextFest. The play's twisted, absurdist take on traditional folklore pleased reviewers; but, for his next project, Tarasenko wanted to tone down the gross-out humour, to create something for the broader Ukrainian community. *House of Sod* revisits many of *Folktale*'s themes and tropes – from the long-suffering, superhumanly sinister baba to bands of intervening, magical animals – but moves the action from a European forest to the Alberta prairies. Tarasenko wanted "to put up a poster at a church and not be worried that people coming would find it too risky," he says. "I just wanted it to be something that everyone could watch and enjoy."

Indeed, the 2007 Fringe audience did "laugh together and have a good time" watching *House of Sod*'s poor protagonist dodge his baba's efforts to thwart his success. Traditional folktales and mythology were always Tarasenko's favourite stories; but this is folklore with

"I really think those stories, because they're rooted in something ancient, carry a lot of weight."

a twist: Baba's no-holds barred passive-aggressive tactics are amplified not only by curses and charms, but by special favours from the gods; in this baba's house, anything can and does happen. "I think tapping into that style of storytelling is a really powerful tool," Tarasenko says. "I really think those stories, because they're rooted in something ancient, carry a lot of weight." He describes his style as "using the classic storytelling mythology and adding in that magic realism."

So where does he get his ideas? "I just go about my business," Tarasenko says, "and as I'm talking to my friends and reading things, I have ideas more and more." Eventually he starts to see themes that unite seemingly random ideas, and a play is in the works. "When I sit down to write, that's really coming to the end of my process." Creating a play, he stresses, requires constant collaboration and interaction. "I really need to be engaged with people, and not just with people, but with the world. Reading a lot of things, talking to a lot of people – that's where I get my best ideas. I take any opportunity to have a conversation with anyone about anything."

It's notoriously difficult to make a living in theatre, but Tarasenko was grateful to spend this summer working with the drama troupe at Fort Edmonton Park, putting on puppet shows and historical vignettes. As he looks ahead to new projects, Tarasenko is ready for anything. "Whatever comes along is the next exciting thing for me," he says, though he admittedly prefers writing and directing to performing.

When asked if he'll continue to work with Ukrainian themes, Tarasenko

says, "I do want to branch out, but I don't I think I could ever – nor would I want to – stop being influenced by my Ukrainian heritage." As well as a rich source of material, "it's what I know; it's what I grew up with; it's who I am."

Tarasenko is encouraged by the community's reaction to his work so far. "I kind of used [*House of Sod*] as a tester to see if the Ukrainian community here in Edmonton in particular wants Ukrainian theatre," he explains. "And even though I didn't get a yes or a no response, I feel that people are ready for something, that they're willing and that they enjoy going to Ukrainian theatre, and I think that was the most important thing I could have asked for." ■

*Naomi Lewis is a freelance writer and editor. Her first novel, Cricket in a Fist, was recently published by Goose Lane Editions.*

*Facing page and below: Performance photos from House of Sod*

PHOTO CREDIT: B. TARASENKO





# Barvy Art Studio

a conversation with artists Iryna Karpenko and Valeriy Semenko

*Interview by Andrea Kopylech*

**A**s you walk into their studio space at the Ukrainian National Federation Hall, you will see groups of children gathered around tables, quietly focused on the paper in front of them. From beside one of the tables, two heads look up, and the instructors beam smiles and a welcome. The room lights up and suddenly you can hear the scratching and swooshing of pencils and brushes marking

crisp white pages. Hands are rapidly moving, there are audible giggles around the room, but all eyes stay fixed on their pages. Concentrating. Imagining. Creating.

Both instructors move around the room bestowing encouragement and direction upon each student. You see a range of skill, a variety of chosen mediums, all portraying their own version of the day's lesson. The end result is only a small part of the process. What really matters is that this art class provides opportunity for each student to express him or herself, to

try a hand with all kinds of mediums, and to develop a solid set of art skills. What makes this art class, and art school unique is that it is taught in Ukrainian. What sets it apart from other classes is the vision, passion, and dedication of its creators, Iryna Karpenko and Valeriy Semenko.

**Iryna Karpenko:** Art is my life. It started in childhood – I can't remember myself without a pencil in my hand. I remember when I was in sadochok. I never wanted to take a nap. I would lay on my mat and draw pictures in the dust on the







and asked us to draw it. As she came around to look at my work, she stopped and picked up my picture and showed it to the class as an example of good work. Later she put it up on display. I felt so proud, and from that moment I knew what I wanted to do.

**IK:** As an artist, I'm a Ukrainian artist, but I always open myself to learning new things and finding a way to include them in my work. I don't limit

broadest range of artistic influences from across Europe. We received a classical, structured education. Art is a skill. You can ask us to use any medium, create a landscape, a portrait, an illustration, and we can – with confidence. Beyond school we were employed as artists.

**IK:** When I first came to Canada, I did not paint for a year. I thought I would die. Everything here is different and I've had to find a new voice. I've learned new techniques and have combined them into my work. The result is a whole new style and medium.

**VS:** Moving to Canada has impacted me dramatically. Eight years ago I arrived in a new country with no support. I had to start over. I had to build my finances, settle my family, establish myself as an artist to a whole new audience. So much change makes a very big impact on a person. When I started to do workshops in the Ukrainian bilingual schools, I saw that there was no formal art instruction for children. The opportunity to develop creative imagination and a skill set at an early age was being missed. Here in Canada, the Ukrainian community has upheld Ukrainian cultural dance and folk art very well. But we saw an opportunity to develop an art school that would go beyond the traditional sensibilities. We wanted to offer students the ability to explore their creative imaginations and draw from their cultural experiences while developing a classical artistic skill set with a contemporary European influence. In February 2007 we opened Barvy Art Studio.

**IK:** The greatest reward is the inspiration I get from the passion of our students. Their creativity inspires me, and their work influences my work.

**VS:** My reward comes from the children's work and watching their progress. We encourage students from seven years and up. Anyone with a passion to be creative and an interest in learning is welcome. ■

*Andrea Kopylech is a freelance writer living in Edmonton.*



Left: Dream, Iryna Karpenko; Top: Sofia, Marichka Ovcharenko, 8 years old  
Above: Iryna Karpenko with Barvy Studio students.

floor with my finger. One day my teacher saw what I was doing, and invited me to come and draw on paper. She liked my creativity and had me draw up pictures for the classroom. From that time on, while everyone else napped, I got to draw, uninterrupted, for an hour by myself.

**Valeriy Semenko:** When I was about four or five years old, my teacher presented the class with a real Christmas tree bough

myself to only producing "Ukrainian" art. When I'm working, I let the ideas flow, and I don't think about whether my work is Ukrainian or not. My work is a reflection of all that I am and all that I see and learn.

**VS:** Our art education has trained us to be professional artists. We are fortunate to have developed our skills from early childhood and to have received a rich education in the arts incorporating the



## Children

*Prisoners in the Promised Land - the Ukrainian internment diary of Anya Soloniuk* - by Marsha Skrypuch and published by Scholastic Books. Fiction. \$14.99

*Kyiv Stories* - by Zirka Menzaryuk, illustrations by Tetyana Semenova. A wonderful book of stories and fairy tales set in the city of Kyiv. Available in Ukrainian or English. \$34.50

*Tistochky z Mushtardoiu / Tomchyk / Natal'chyn Kotyk / Druzi* and more - reprinted. Written by Lesia Savedchuk, these quirky little books are a must for all children. 21 books in total. Written in Ukrainian. \$6.75 each

*Harri Potter i Smertel'ni Relikvii* - by J.K. Rowling. The latest and last book in the Harry Potter series. Ukrainian language. \$38.95

## Adult

*Ukrainian Drawn Thread Embroidery* - Merezhka

*Poltavska* - by Yvette Stanton. This book contains full instructions for learning the art of Merezhka embroidery as well as many projects to try. \$19.95

*Strawberry Fields* - by Marina Lewycka. Following the lives of a rag-tag group of immigrant workers hired to pick strawberries over the summer. \$29.95

*Once Lived a Village* - join author Steven Kashuba in the search for his father's village, burned to the ground by zealous nationalists in 1945. \$34.95

## Strawberry Fields by Marina Lewycka

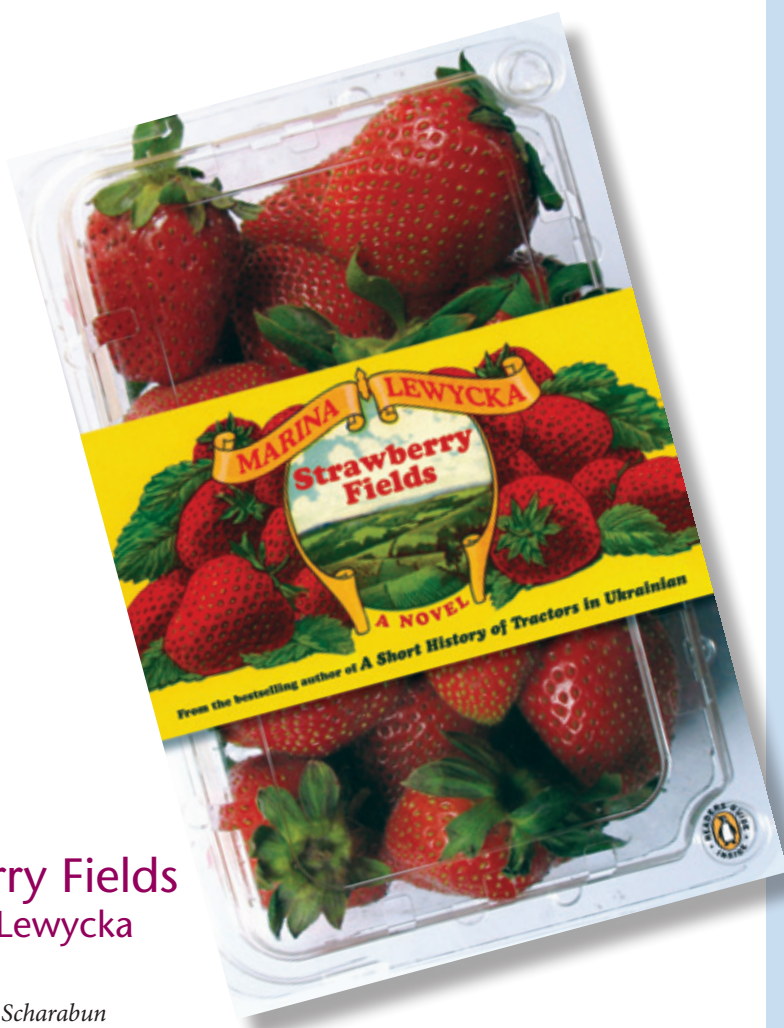
reviewed by Elena Scharabun

*Strawberry Fields* is the newest novel by Marina Lewycka, international best-selling author of *A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian*. This is a fun story of a crew of immigrant workers from three continents coming together in England to harvest strawberries for the summer. Each has their own reason for coming and their own dreams. Some have come to earn money, others to find the typical English gentleman or lady they have read about in their studies, while others still are just trying to survive. Through the summer we follow Yola, the Polish supervisor, Irina the young women from Kyiv, Andriy a young man from Donetsk and their fellow pickers from the troubles in the fields (caused by love of course) to their exploits by the ocean (where more problems arise) to the cities. Along the way we learn about auto mechanics, chicken farming and a dog with great insight. While some workers will survive and find their way to the end, others return home, drift away or are sent by the "employment agency" to earn money in another fashion.

*Strawberry Fields* gives us an eye into the world of immigrant workers and the troubles they can face. Exploitation by employers, unscrupulous agencies set up in Eastern Europe and Asia and families splitting up in order to survive. It also shows us that love can flourish anywhere and in any situation.

Though many of us found the characters in *Tractors* to be familiar and could identify with the story, this is not the case with *Strawberry Fields*. Lewycka introduces us to characters we have heard about in news stories and weaves their personal lives into a wonderful tale. This book is not as light and fanciful as *Tractors* but is definitively a good read.

Elena Scharabun is the owner of Edmonton's Ukrainian Bookstore.





# Lystivky from Around the Globe

## Postcard from Cheremosh in China

by Meaghan Goebel

Cheremosh Ukrainian Dance company headed off to China for three whole weeks of fun and dancing. With a tour schedule that was heavy on the dancing, we performed 10 shows within that time to a collective audience of between 25 and 27,000 people! And what audiences! With a standing ovation in Beijing, we were constantly amazed by the reception of the Chinese people. We traveled with Blackfoot Medicine Speaks, an Aboriginal group from Alberta as well, and the memories we all made traveling, dancing, and generally hanging out while we were in China could not be traded for...you guessed it, all the tea in China. Our groups traveled to some lesser known areas of China as well as the major cities of Beijing, Xian and Datong and we can only hope that we caused a sensation strong enough to realize how powerful and present the Ukrainian culture still is in Canada today.

*Meaghan Goebel is a Ukrainian dancer with Cheremosh and a freelance writer. She lives in Edmonton.*

Photos provided  
by Cheremosh





# ALBERTA COUNCIL FOR THE UKRAINIAN ARTS

What does ACUA do for the Ukrainian arts in Alberta?



**ACUA** fosters a greater awareness of Ukrainian arts through exhibits, tours, festivals, educational programs, workshops, and special projects.

**ACUA** provides information about Ukrainian artists and cultural activities in Alberta.

**ACUA** promotes growth in the Ukrainian arts by providing annual scholarships through the Ukrainian Resource and Development Centre at Grant MacEwan and The Ukrainian Bilingual High School Program in Edmonton.

**ACUA** publishes a biannual Ukrainian arts and culture magazine, *ACUA Vitae*.

**ACUA** is a resource to help the Alberta community connect with the many different Ukrainian arts organizations and individual artists.

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**YES!** I would like to become a member of the Alberta Council for the Ukrainian Arts (ACUA). My membership fee includes a subscription to ACUA's magazine *ACUA Vitae*.

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