

Yara Arts Group from La MaMa Experimental Theatre presents:

YARA'S WINTER FESTIVAL: WORLD EPIC SONGS

BURYAT EPIC SONGS



December 2020

www.yaraartsgroup.net

Yara Arts Group from La MaMa Experimental Theatre presents:
Yara's World Epic Song Festival

Buryat uligers

Entrance music: introduction from Yara's "The Warrior's Sister"
Performed by Viktor Zalsanov with Meredith Wright

Introductions - Virlana Tkacz

On the Buryat Uligers - Virlana Tkacz

Music: excerpt from *The Dark and Mighty Khan*
Performed by Suman Sontokhonov

Music: excerpt from *The Land Where the Moon Rises*
Performed by singing group from Shudkhalan

Music: excerpt from *Guldamey with the Thin Neck*
Performed by Bada Barnakov

Music: excerpt from *The Vessel with Seven Rings*
Performed Singing group from Ranzhurov

Viktor Zhalsanov sings the introduction to:

Altan Galuu noem Khaubuun or Khan Golden Goose

Discussion on Epics with Julian Kytasty

Music: from *Sayan Maktal or Hymn to the Sayan Mountains*
Performed by Viktor Zalsanov

Exit Music from *Guldamey with the Thin Neck*

From Yara's "The Warrior's Sister"

virtual event directed by Virlana Tkacz

bandurist and epic singer: Julian Kytasty

visual design: Waldemart Klyuzko

translations by Sayan Zhambalov, Virlana Tkacz and Wanda Phipps

video of Victor Zhalsanov by Aleksandr Khantayev

graphic design by Waldemart Klyuzko

Yara's Winter Festival was made possible with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a State Agency and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and individual contributions from the friends of Yara Arts Group.

On Buryats: The Buryats are an indigenous, Asian people who live in eastern Siberia in the area around Lake Baikal. Buryatia became a part of the Russian Empire in the 17th century when Siberia was colonized, and is a republic of the Russian Federation. The Buryat language is related to Mongolian, while Buryat spiritual practices include a unique blend of Tibetan Buddhism and shamanism. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union there has been a revival of interest in traditional Buryat culture.

On uligers, or Buryat Epic Songs: Buryat epic songs from Siberia are known as *uligers*. Traditionally, the *uligers* were sung by Buryat bards called *uligershyns* during long winter evenings to small circles of friends and neighbors. The bards sang of mythical heroes and accompanied themselves on a *morin khur* or horse head fiddle.

The Warrior's Sister is based on the epic song, "Alamzhi the Warrior with the Eagle Eye and His Sister Aguy Gokhon" which is over 5,000 verses long. It was recorded from the story teller Yolbon Shalbykov by Tsedyn Zhamsarno August 18-20, 1903 in the Ust-Orda Buryat Region near Lake Baikal in Siberia. The epic has been translated for the show into English by Sayan Zhambalov, Virlana Tkacz and Wanda Phipps. Since 1996, Yara artists have traveled to Buryatia to collect ancient songs and stories in the villages and to collaborate with local artists on a number of original theatre pieces.

VIRLANA TKACZ heads the Yara Arts Group and has directed over thirty original shows at La MaMa Theatre in New York, as well as in Kyiv, Lviv, Kharkiv, Bishkek, Ulaanbaatar, and Ulan Ude. She has co-produced a series of concerts and recordings of Buryat Mongolian artists and of the Koliadnyky of Kryvorivnia from the Carpathian Mountains. She has also worked with Kyrgyz artists to create two theatre pieces based on Kyrgyz epics songs.

JULIAN KYTASTY grew up within a strong tradition of family music-making. He is a third generation bandurist following in the footsteps of his father Petro and grandfather Ivan Kytasty, and is recognized for his performance of Ukrainian epic songs. He works frequently with Yara Arts Group, most recently on a series of virtual events exploring the life and work of New York bandurist Zynoviy Shtokalko. His work on Yara's *1917-2017 Tychyna, Zhadan, and the Dogs* earned him a NY Innovative Theater Award for best original score.

VICTOR ZHALSANOV (*uligershyn*) started throat singing in 1997 and immersed himself in the art of the Buryat *uliger*, or epic tradition. In 1998, he collaborated with Yara on *Tsagaan Shubunnay Dunn* and was featured as the epic singer in *Circle* in Ulan Ude, Ulaanbaatar and the Moscow Theatre Olympics. He also performed in Yara's *The Warrior's Sister*. He has since become a well-known performer of traditional Buryat music and appeared

internationally and in films. Recently, he has also directed theatre shows at the Buryat National Theatre in Ulan Ude.

ALEXANDER KHANTAEV (video) was born in Irkutsk, Siberia. He traveled with Yara on research trips to Ust-Orda, Aginsk, Eastern Mongolia, China and Ukraine. The photographs from these trips formed the core of the prize-winning book *Shanar: Dedication Ritual of a Buryat Shaman* and his exhibits at La MaMa Galleria. His work has also been shown at the Open Space Gallery in Saratoga Springs, New York Public Library, Indiana University, Permanent Mission of Mongolia to the UN and the Museum of East and West Art in Kyiv and Bezpala Gallery in Toronto.

WALDEMART KLYUZKO is an artist from Kyiv who has collaborated with Yara Arts Group since 2010, most recently creating the set for *Opera GAZ*. He is a visual artist who has had exhibits at La MaMa Galleria, the Ukrainian Institute of America and the Bezpala Gallery in Toronto.

DARIEN FIORINO is at Cornell University studying environmental science and performing arts. He was in Yara's *Winter Songs on Mars* and *1917/2017: Tychyna, Zhadan, and the Dogs* at La MaMa.

Special Thanks to Meredith Wright.

STAFF: Folklorist: Iryna Voloshyna, Publicity: Zoriana Siokalo

YARA ARTS GROUP was established in 1990 and is a resident company at La MaMa, the acclaimed experimental theater in New York. Yara has created thirty-seven theatre pieces based on extensive research in Eastern Europe, Siberia and Asia, in Yara's signature style of multilingual dialogue and songs supported by evocative visuals and documentation. Yara has also created numerous traditional music events and the *Kurbas: New Worlds* exhibition for the Art Arsenal in Kyiv. **Yara Arts Group 306 East 11th St #3B, New York, NY 10003 (212)475-6474 yara@prodigy.net www.yaraartsgroup.net**

Yara Arts Group is a resident company of La MaMa E.T.C.



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