

Yara Arts Group from La MaMa Experimental Theatre presents:

YARA'S THEATRE PROJECTS:

FOREST SONG



www.yaraartsgroup.net
February 2021

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Entrance: poster with "Ice Music" by Genji Ito from *Yara's Forest Song*

Introductions and on Lesia Ukrainka: Virlana Tkacz

On *Forest Song* and Our Translation: Wanda Phipps

On the First Reading and Later Development: Shona Tucker

Creating the Design, Music and Movement: Watoku Ueno, Shigeko Suga

Creating *Yara's Forest Song*: Jude Domski, Kateryna Slipchenko and Oksana Batiuk

Exit music: "Spatial Music #4" by Genji Ito from *Yara's Forest Song*

virtual event directed by Virlana Tkacz

graphic design: Waldemart Klyuzko

tech support: Chris Ignacio

premiere: February 11, 2021

LESIA UKRAINKA - Scholars agree that Ukrainian literature has had three great writers, considered classics, the center of the cannon. They are: Taras Shevchenko (1814-1861), born a serf who became a great Romantic poet, Ivan Franko (1856-1916), son of a blacksmith best known for his realistic prose and Lesia Ukrainka (born Larissa Kosach (1871-1913), who wrote fiery poems as a girl and later created poetic modernist dramas. Dmytro Czyzhevkiy, a literary scholar, wrote: "If any Ukrainian works can speak to humanity at large, they are certainly Lesia Ukrainka's poetic dramas."

Lesia Ukrainka was the daughter of a councilor and a writer, who grew up surrounded by major figures in Ukrainian arts and sciences. She was well-educated, and made numerous trips to Europe and the Middle East. She knew German, French, English, Italian, Latin, Greek, Polish and Bulgarian. Her earliest dramatic works reveal an affinity for Ibsen, as well as an appreciation for Maeterlinck. Many of her poetic dramas drew their themes from the spiritual history of the world. They examined the historical process and how individual aspirations operate within societal constraints. Her later works, such as *Forest Song* reveal a unique voice and strong female centered sense of drama.

Virlana Tkacz

WANDA PHIPPS (co-translator) is a founding member of Yara and has been translating Ukrainian poetry with Virlana Tkacz since 1989. Together they have received the Agni Review Poetry Award and the National Theatre Translation Award, as well as several grants from the New York State Council on the Arts.

SHONA TUCKER joined Yara in 1991 as Luba Hakkebush in *Light from the East*. She has gone on to work with Yara on countless other projects-- twice touring Ukraine and performing poetry, conducting workshops and singing all over the eastern seaboard of the US. Shona is currently a full professor at Vassar College and Chair of the Drama Department. She is proud to be a part of this conversation about Lesia Ukrainka, a strong important voice in Ukrainian self-definition. Please visit shonatucker.com to find out more about the artist.

OKSANA BATIUK, a Ukrainian poet, joined the first rehearsals of *Yara's Forest Song* in 1993. Together with Virlana she translated into Ukrainian the American poetry included in the show. Their translations were published in *Kurier Kryvbasu* in Ukraine. For years she edited Ukrainian dubs of American films and TV serial. Today she is an editor with Yakaboo Publishing.

WATOKU UENO (designer) came to La MaMa in 1982 and worked on projects with Ping Chong, Ubu Rep and David Rousseve. He has also worked in New York theatres and internationally in Asia, Siberia and Eastern Europe. He is a founding member of the Yara Arts Group and has worked on almost every Yara show from its conception to its final production

SHIGEKO SARA SUGA has worked in over 140 theatrical productions local (NYC) as well as international tours. She has worked with Yara Arts Group since *Blind Sight* as a performer and choreographer, creating the movement for the actors in the shows. Shigeko specializes in Flamenco and Butoh movement and chants.<http://www.shigekosuga.com>

JUDE DOMSKI worked with Yara Arts Group as an assistant director and performer in 1993 - 1995, and was part of the development and production of *Yara's Forest Song* in NYC and Lviv. She lives in Vermont where she works in photography, video and community access to media. www.judedomski.com

KATERYNA SLIPCHENKO was literary manager of the Kurbas Young Theatre in Lviv when she met Yara Arts Group. She worked with Yara on its first collaborative projects in Ukraine, including *Blind Sight* in 1993 and *Yara's Forest Song* in 1994. Today she is a film critic in Lviv.

VIRLANA TKACZ (director/co-translator) 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

received an NEA Poetry Translation Fellowship for her translations with Wanda Phipps.

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.

CHRIS IGNACIO works at La MaMa Experimental Theatre. He was in *Yara's Dream Bridge*, *Winter Songs on Mars* and *1917/2017: Tychyna, Zhadan, and the Dogs* at La MaMa.

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. **Yara Arts Group 306 East 11th St #3B, New York, NY 10003 (212)475-6474 www.yaraartsgroup.net**

Yara's Virtual Events were made possible with public funds from New York State Council on the Arts, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the Self Reliance (NY) Foundation and contributions from the friends of Yara Arts Group.



You can watch all Yara's Virtual Events for free any time on

www.yaraartsgroup.net

including our series on Yara's Theatre Projects:

Swan (2003), based on a poem by Oleh Lysheha

Er Toshutk (2009), based on a Kyrgyz epic

Raven (2011), based on a poem by Oleh Lysheha

Koliada Winter Shows at La MaMa (2008-2019)