

Yara Arts Group from La MaMa Experimental Theatre presents:

# YARA'S THEATRE PROJECTS:

## YARA'S FOREST SONG



www.yaraartsgroup.net  
February 2021

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#### *Yara's Forest Song*

**Entrance:** "Ice Music" words by Ray A. Young Bear, music by Genji Ito

**Introductions, on Lesia Ukrainka, Our Workshop and the Making of a Bilingual Version:** Virlana Tkacz

**Creating *Yara's Forest Song* in Lviv:** Andrew Colteaux, Karen Angela Bishop, Shigeko Suga, Andriy Vodychev, Oleh Drach, Tanya Kaspruk and Natalia Polovynka

"A Strong Wind" words by UvavnuK, Iglulik, music by Genji Ito

Video clip Spell Scene from *Yara's Forest Song*

Video clip "Lament" words by Wendell Berry

**On *Yara's Forest Song* in New York:** Ian Wen, Victoria Linchon and Wanda Phipps

**Exit music:** "Ice Music" words by Ray A Young Bear, music by Genji Ito from end of *Yara's Forest Song* in New York

virtual event directed by Virlana Tkacz

graphic design: Waldemart Klyuzko, tech support: Chris Ignacio

premiere: February 18, 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, and 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**

**ANDREW COLTEAUX** (performer) created the part of Vasyl Yeroshenko in Yara Arts Group's *Blind Sight* and performed it in Kharkiv, Kyiv and in New York at La MaMa. He also appeared in *Yara's Forest Song*, *Swan*, *The Warrior's Sister*, *Raven* and *Dream Bridge*. which performed in Lviv, Kyiv, Bishkek and at La MaMa. A native of northern California, he is glad to be back in Marin County.

**KAREN ANGELA BISHOP** (performer) worked with Yara on Yara's Forest Song and Waterfall/Reflections with Nina Matvienko. She is currently working on her PhD in religious studies and teaching at a seminary.

**SHIGEKO SARA SUGA** (performer and movement) 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>

**OLEH DRACH** (performer) appeared in *Yara's Forest Song*, and *Koliada* in 2004 at the Kurbas Theatre Center in Kyiv, where he now works. He also teaches his creative approach to acting and has appeared in numerous films.

**ANDRIY VODYCHEV** (performer) appeared in *Yara's Forest Song* and Yara's Theatre workshop at Harvard. After many years of working in theatre in Kyiv, he has returned to the Kurbas Theatre in Lviv.

**TANYA KASPRUK** (performer) appeared in *Yara's Forest Song*. She also appears in the current version of the *Forest Song* directed by Andriy Pykhodko at the Kurbas Theatre in Lviv,

**NATALKA POLOVYNKA** (performer) appeared in *Yara's Forest Song* and worked for many years at the Kurbas Theatre in Lviv. Today she heads her own theatre; Voice and Word in Lviv.

**IAN WEN** (performer) is the co-artistic director of De Novo Dance, and continues to teach the MFA and BFA acting students at Brooklyn College, where he has been on faculty for almost 20 years. These days he is happiest raising his two young daughters, Maya and Lea.

**VICTORIA LINCHONG** (performer) appeared I Yara's Forest Song and worked at the Theatre for the New City in New York. Reecnetly she spect several years in Berlin and is now back in New York, working with the Target Margin Theatre.

**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 for their translation of *The Forest Song*, as well as several grants from the New York State Council on the Arts.

**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** (graphics) 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** (tech support) 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](http://www.yaraartsgroup.net)

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Council on the Arts



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You can watch all Yara's Virtual Events for free any time on [www.yaraartsgroup.net](http://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  
and *Koliada Winter Shows* at La MaMa (2008-2019)