

CHERWELL COLLEGE NEWSLETTER



SPECIAL ISSUE

THE INAUGURAL UKRAINIAN CULTURE WEEKS IN OXFORD

We were sincerely delighted to become a part of the big festival celebrating Ukrainian high culture in Oxford this autumn. Ukrainian Culture Weeks brought a series of extraordinary and unforgettable evenings of beautiful classical music, art and talks. The pinnacle of the Ukrainian Culture Weeks 2022 is the Bouquet Kyiv Stage Festival, which takes place annually in Kyiv city, Ukraine, at the historical site of St. Sophia National Reserve.

The festival was intended as a gift of gratitude to the British People for the tremendous support they have given to Ukraine and the Ukrainians. The Ukrainian Culture Weeks 2022 initiative has been launched by Cherwell College Oxford, Ukrainian Cultural Centre Dom Master Klass, and Oxford University Ukrainian Society, with the aim of supporting Ukrainian culture and heritage.

The concerts were sold out well before the days, and every hall was full of applause! From the opening with the extravagant fashion show by Fedir Vozianov to the final poignant and outstanding performance given by Chamber Choir Kyiv, conducted by M. Hobdych, every event has been special, touching the strings of the soul!

Oxford gave a very warm welcome to the contemporary "Ukrainian Paganini" Bohdana Pivnenko and an outstanding pianist Anna Khmara. The creative duet performed Ukrainian compositional art of the last quarter of the 20th century and the first two decades of the 21st century.

As expected, the special guests to the festival – Apollo5 (London) treated the audience with premiers at the Christ Church Cathedral. The choir performed the works by Victoria Poleva and Anna Kuzina-Rozhdestvenska in the magnificent venue. Victoria Poleva herself attended the event, as well as the final concert of the Piano Marathon at the Holywell Music Room, where Anthonii Baryshevskyi gave an evocative performance of the works composed by Victoria and other world-famous Ukrainian composers.

Anthonii was one of three contemporary pianists to make the Piano Marathon fantastic on the second day of the festival. Yevhen Gromov opened the day with the emotional performance of Haydn, Liatoshynsky, Stankovych and Schubert, and was followed by the tenderness of Valentyn Sylvestrov's Bagatelles – XII performed by the virtuoso pianist Oleh Bezborodko.

UKRAINIAN CULTURE WEEKS BOUQUET KYIV STAGE FESTIVAL



The festival included the talks given by the Director General of St. Sophia National Reserve – Nelia Kukovalska and the world-famous Ukrainian Composer Valentyn Sylvestrov. The movie nights at Ertegun House with iconic and contemporary Ukrainian movies attracted cinematography connoisseurs. Cherwell College Gallery hosts three exhibitions open until the end of October: "The War" by O. Glyadelov, "Warriors of Light" and the art sale of D. Sharashydzhe.

The Grand Finale at the Sheldonian has become a pinnacle of the days of the celebration of music. Together with the Orchestra of St John's, Ukrainian performers delivered the night of the triumph of the music. The audience enjoyed Handel's Messiah and the Spiritual Concertos by the trio Berezovsky, Bortniansky and Vedel. The evening culminated with the glorious performance delivered by Chamber Choir Kyiv, with the surprise congratulation to Valentyn Sylvestrov on his 85th birthday.

Cherwell College Oxford students volunteered at the concert in Sheldonian, and the College is proud that they put in the effort for an all-embracing big event with a great cause.



MAX, CHERWELL STUDENT, YEAR 13:

"Amazing to see and talk to the world-famous Ukrainian composer, to hear the genius speak about the inception of creative ideas, his creative path. The College did a great job and we are all proud! Bravo!"

SPECIAL ISSUE

THE PRINCIPAL **STEPHEN CLARKE** IN AN INTERVIEW WITH **WANJIRU KARIUKI**

What was it like to have a greater insight into Ukrainian Culture?

I lived in Ukraine and actually worked for the British Embassy but I think what has been good in Oxford is the response, not just from the Ukrainians here but from the British people as well. Particularly at the Sheldonian Theatre concert, which has been so warmly received by members of public here in Oxford.

Would you consider Ukraine a second home since you worked there?

Yes! I lived there for 10 years and worked for the government.

What was your initial reaction to the outbreak of war?

Disgraceful in one word.

What part of the Ukrainian Culture Weeks reminded you of your own time living in Ukraine?

Hospitality and friendliness. It made the invasion even worse and more heartbreaking.

Would you want to see Oxford do more for Ukraine? Can you see yourself being at the front of leading something like that?

One of the issues is that while we had the UCW, we can't let it just drift away and we must have people lobbying our government.

Do you think the government should do more to assist Ukraine?

I think they are doing a lot already and I'm not sure we can do too much more because of the Russian reaction. I think it was very devious of Russia by falsifying the annexation of four regions and had we reacted, then Putin could claim that as a Russian attack.

Do you see the war ending soon or escalating?

I think it will go on for another year at least. You only have to look at World War 2 which went on for 6 years and Syria which continued for 8 and it's been going on 8 years in Eastern Ukraine. It won't finish tomorrow, it will continue for a long time due to reoccupation and reconstruction. People also seem to forget that resources are needed to keep an army going. When I was working in conflict resolution, I got to know the massive number of resources involved in the military and that was just in peacekeeping.



Do you think people outside should help in the reconstruction of Ukraine?

When it's eventually over I think it would be another Marshall Plan since the first one was generally successful.

Do you think there's a possibility of World War 3?

I think Putin would be stopped by the people around him if he wanted to go through with nuclear warfare. Because all you have to do is remember Hiroshima and Chernobyl. I think the Russian people and government have an understanding that no one would withstand a nuclear war. People also have a tendency outside of the West to underestimate the power of the American Military force and would be willing to stamp out the threat of war.

Is there one thing that you want people to take away from Ukraine Culture Week?

They have to remember and try to take in more of Eastern European Culture, with its ballet and music which is phenomenal, but it is taken for granted and we should make people more aware of its wonderful and moving culture.



ZUHAYR, CHERWELL STUDENT, YEAR 13:

"It was great to be part of this, to help make it happen! It is not only a huge event to manage, but it has been created for a big and important cause – to remind the audience again about the support that is needed for Ukraine as a country standing against the evil and threat to humankind"

SPECIAL ISSUE

THE VICE-PRINCIPAL HELEN CLARKE IN AN INTERVIEW WITH WANJIRU KARIUKI

What was it like to have a chance to celebrate your own Ukrainian heritage with so many other Ukrainians?

It reminded me of my childhood: to be in the company of musicians, taking rehearsals seriously and supporting each other. I grew up in a similar environment with my mother being a music teacher and my stepfather managing a youth orchestra

Something special happened at the Festival: one of the ladies from the choir appeared to be a special friend of the classmate of my daughter from Kyiv. It shows how the world is small and you are one family.

What was the highlight for Ukraine Culture Week for yourself?

Communicating through Art and Music to a wider audience about Unity, European values, Hope and Gratitude.

Art is the shortest path from one heart to another, and from one nation to another. We hope that people experienced an aesthetic pleasure, as well as broaden their knowledge about Ukrainian composers, artists and about the war that Ukraine is now going through.

Did any event during the Culture Weeks remind you of home?

Yes, very much so. We shared a house with 10 beautiful, talented, kind and very hospitable ladies from Kyiv Choir. Every time I was coming back I felt very like that I was back in my childhood days, full of camaraderie, support, humour.

Would you ever consider doing something similar again to celebrate your culture on a bigger scale?

Cherwell College Oxford, Oxford University Ukrainian Society and Bouquet Kyiv Stage are hoping to continue the Ukrainian Culture Weeks in Oxford to maintain a continuous collaboration between Ukrainian and British musicians, artists to join this Oxford season every year and raise further high culture interests between two countries: the United Kingdom and Ukraine. We believe that solid friendship between Ukraine and the United Kingdom is getting stronger, where culture and education are the crucial pillars in this process.

What do you hope to see in the Oxford community in further support of Ukraine?

Oxford and Oxfordshire are very supportive towards Ukrainians and this festival was to thank the community and express the gratitude.



Valentyn Sylvestrov: Living Legend in talk with Professor Martyn Harry

All those attending the final day of the festival had a unique opportunity to attend a talk given by one of the world's greatest living composers, Valentyn Sylvestrov, in conversation with Professor Martyn Harry (John Bennett lecturer in music, St Hilda's). The event took place at Jacqueline du Pre Music Building (St Hilda's College) on Saturday 1st October, and it followed the Music of Poetry concert, where the chamber-vocal part of Sylvestrov's music, written to poems by Ukrainian and world poets, has been performed by the duet of Inna Galatenko (soprano) and Oleh Bezbordko (piano).

Valentyn Sylvestrov is the most performed Ukrainian composer in the world, the winner of the Koussevitzky International Award, Gaudeamus International Composers Award, and Shevchenko National Prize of Ukraine. Since the 1960s, Valentyn Sylvestrov's music has been played at international festivals, his compositions are included in the repertoire of famous orchestras and performers.

