

Yara Arts Group from La MaMa Experimental Theatre presents:

YARA'S THEATRE EVENTS:

VIRTUAL FOREST SONG



June 2021

www.yaraartsgroup.net

Yara Arts Group from La MaMa Experimental Theatre presents:

VIRTUAL FOREST SONG created by Yara Arts Group

includes fragments of "Forest Song" by Lesia Ukrainka
as translated by Virlana Tkacz & Wanda Phipps,
Native American, English & American poetry
plus traditional songs from Ukraine

with Sanskar Agarwal, Andrew Colteaux, Darien Fiorino, Silvana Gonzalez,
Akiko Hiroshima, Chamaya Moody, Martin Nikolov Nam Pham, Masha
Pruss, Shigeko Sara Suga, Shona Tucker, Iryna Voloshyna and Georgia
Wahler

directed by Virlana Tkacz
movement: Shigeko Sara Suga
costumes: Keiko Obremski
projections & graphics: Waldemart Klyuzko
video & images: Evgeniy Maloletka & Jim Krantz
singer: Iryna Voloshyna, flute: Ihor Didenchuk
bandura: Julian Kytasty, sound: Maksym Lozynskyj
translations: Virlana Tkacz, Wanda Phipps & Oksana Batiuk
literary manager: Oksana Lebedivna
casting & coordination: Martin Nikolov
technical manager: Darien Fiorino
live-stream: Chris Ignacio/La MaMa

Dedicated to Ellen Stewart, the mama of LaMaMa and all Yara artists who
worked on previous versions. In memory of Genji Ito.

LESIA UKRAINKA (born Larissa Kosach (1871-1913), grew up at a time when it
was illegal to write and publish in Ukrainian. She wrote fiery poems as a girl and later
created poetic modernist dramas. Dmytro Czyzhevkiy, wrote that: "if any Ukrainian
works can speak to humanity at large, they are certainly Lesia Ukrainka's poetic
dramas." At a time when most Ukrainians were impoverished villagers, Lesia
Ukrainka was the daughter of a judge 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. Her earliest dramatic works reveal an affinity for
Ibsen. 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 and relationship to nature. **Virlana Tkacz**

TEXTS, SONGS, MUSIC & IMAGES used in the production:

scenes from "Forest Song" by Lesia Ukrainka, 1911

translated by Virlana Tkacz & Wanda Phipps

from "Moved" by Uvavnuk, Iglulik Eskimo Woman

translated into Ukrainian by Oksana Batiuk & Virlana Tkacz

music by Genji Ito, based on traditional music

flute music, traditional tunes collected by Lesia Ukrainka for "Forest Song"

performed by Ihor Didenchuk

"Tylynka" traditional tylynka tune, performed by Ostop Kostyuk

and the Koliadnyky of Kryvorivnia

"Oi khto v tomu lisi stukaie hukae" (Who is that yelling in the forest)

traditional song

from "Lost" by David Wagoner

translated into Ukrainian by Oksana Batiuk & Virlana Tkacz

"Selo horyt" (The village burns) traditional midsummer song

performed by artists in Yara's *Fire Water Night* (2013)

"Spatial music" by Genji Ito, based on traditional music,

from *Yara's Forest Song* (1994)

"Sohodni Ivana" (Today is St John's) traditional midsummer song

from "I Go From the Woods" by Wendell Berry

translated into Ukrainian by Oksana Batiuk & Virlana Tkacz

video & photo images by Evgeniy Maloletka, Jim Krantz and Waldemart Klyuzko

edited by Waldemart Klyuzko with traditional song "Choho pole pochornilo" sung

by Iryna Voloshyna and Julian Kytasty

from "Hot Sun" poem by George Peele (1556-1596)

"Neuron on Fire," photograph by Olesia Bilash, Basu Lab, Neuroscience Institute,

New York University Langone Health

COMPANY

SANSKAR AGARWAL (Luke), an acting student at Tisch, looks forward to bringing a lot of love, passion and sensitivity to this play - all the way from his screen to yours! He hopes you'll be sitting on the edge of your bed frame with bated breath, and carry the laptop with you should you ever get up to get something. Notable credits in his past year of "virtual" theatre include *Marjorie Prime* (Tisch ETW Mainstage), *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* (Latinx Artists Collective), *Ad Nauseum* (Fresh Lime Soda Productions) and *Everybody* (Stella Alder).

ANDREW COLTEAUX (Oak) 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.

DARIEN FIORINO (Water Brat /Spark/Sycamore/Field) is an actor and a graduate student at Harvard University. He was in Yara's *Winter Songs on Mars* and *1917/2017*:

Tychyna, *Zhadan*, and *the Dogs* at La MaMa. Other notable roles include Hank Williams in Leigh Fondakowski's *Spill* and Iachimo in Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*.

SILVANA GONZALEZ (Ondine/Field) is a Mexican actress and dancer. She graduated from NYU Tisch. Her most recent credits are *Hera (FauxBia! The Musical)*, *Hermia (A Midsummer Night's Dream)*, *Cynthia (WarLovers)*, and *Louise Overbee (Love/Sick)*. Her film credits include Dr. Esperanza Haddid (*Call the Sandman*), *Maria (Disconnect)*. She is honored to be a part of *Forest Song*, and its incredible team of artists.

AKIKO HIROSHIMA (Water Brat/Berry/Field) is excited to perform again with Yara. Previous shows with Yara include *Flight of the White Bird*, *Circle*, *Kupala* and *Winter Songs on Mars*. She also has played characters such as a Japanese war bride, Vietnamese virgin prostitute, Apostle, etc. Akiko sings with happyfunsmile and Elena Moon Park with Friends. She'll be performing at Austin City Limits this year!!

CHAMAYA MOODY (Rose/Field Nymph) is thrilled to be performing again. Past credits include *The Black Monologues* (Victory Gardens Theatre), *Lorriane* in *All Shook Up* (Williams Street Repertory Theatre), *Knuffle Bunny* (Northbrook Theatre), and *Grace* in *Annie* (Citadel Theatre). Chamaya graduated with a Theatre degree from Northwestern University as well as from the Musical Theatre Certificate Program. She loves teaching toddlers, drinking matcha tea, and writing for her blog.

MARTIN NIKOLOV (Ash/Field/Keeper) is a Bulgarian-American actor and filmmaker. He graduated from Vassar College in 2020 and is excited to be exploring the arts in NYC. His acting experience includes *The Room* and *The Danube* at the Hangar Theater, *The Flick*, *The Antipodes*, *Dogfight*, *Fine*. with Vassar Drama, *Much Ado about Nothing* at MONTFIZ Bulgaria, *The Night Crew* at NYFA Australia, and *He Loves You* with Vassar Film. mvnikolov.com @mvnikolov

NAM PHAM (Spring Flood/Kutz/Field) Born and raised in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, Nam Pham had his first stage experience at 14 in a production of *Treasure Island*. He's been hooked ever since. His most recent work includes *Gang Sines* at Abrons Arts Center, *Hoppla! We're Alive!* at La Mama, *The Laramie Project* at Mabou Mines, and *Emerson at Bigmart* at The Pit Loft. Pham is also excited to come back to The New School this Fall 2021 to pursue a Master's degree in Environmental Policy and Sustainability Management.

MASHA PRUSS (Birch) graduated from Kyiv State Institute of Theatrical Arts and worked as an actress in Kyiv Drama and Comedy Theatre on the Left Bank, Her film roles include Galia in *How Steel was Tempered*, Feodosia in *Taras Shevchenko* and KGB agent Vera in "The Americans." She also appeared in Yara's winter shows with the Koliadnyky.

SHIGEKO SARA SUGA (Willow/Field/choreographer) is grateful to be returning to *Yara's Forest Song*. She has been a member of Yara Arts Group since *Blind Sight* 1993 and has traveled with the company to Ukraine as well as Kyrgyzstan. Shigeiko has performed in over 140 international and national productions since arriving in NYC 1986. Last credits include: Haenyeo (sea diver) in *Endlings* at NYTW, Mrs.

Borkman in *John Gabriel Borkman* with Pan Asian Rep, Ensemble in La Mama's (Great Jones Rep) *The Trojan Women*. <http://www.shigekosuga.com>

SHONA TUCKER (Boss) 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.

IRYNA VOLOSHYNA (Traditional Singer/Kylyna) is a folklorist working with Yara Arts Group. Originally from Khmelnytskyi, Ukraine, she sang with Ladovytsi. In New York, she is a member of Ukrainian Village Voices and works at the Ukrainian Museum. She is a doctoral student at Indiana University.

GEORGIA WAEHLER (Sylph) Yara Arts Group/La MaMa Debut. Theatre credits include Puck in *Midsummer* (Santa Fe Botanical Gardens) Una in *Blackbird* (Playwrights Downtown White Box) and #11 in *The Wolves* (Frederick Loewe Theatre). Film credits include *The Uncredited*, *Shrink Again*, *High Roller*, and *How I've Met God*. BFA: NYU Tisch Drama. georgiawaeehler.com @georgiawaeehler

VIRLANA TKACZ (director/co-translator) heads the Yara Arts Group and has directed over thirty original shows at La MaMa Theatre in New York that also performed in Kyiv, Lviv, Kharkiv, Bishkek, Ulaanbaatar, and Ulan Ude. She received an NEA Poetry Translation Fellowship for her translations with Wanda Phipps. Her production of *1917-2017: Tychyna Zhadan & the Dogs* won the 2018 New York Innovative Theatre Awards for best musical.

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.

OKSANA BATIUK, (translation into Ukrainian), is 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.

KEIKO OBREMSKI (costume designer) is originally from Japan. She performed with Tokyo Kid Brothers at La Mama. She has worked with Yara Arts since *Scythian Stones*. Her recent design credits are: *Fire Water Night*, *Capt. John Smith Goes to Ukraine*, *Winter Light*, *Hitting Bedrock*, *1917-2017 Tychyna, Zhadan & the Dogs* and *Winter Songs on Mars*. She has worked as a dresser for Broadway shows and is also a Kimono dresser.

WALDEMART KLYUZKO (projection design/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.

EVGENIY MALOLETKA (video/images) is a Ukrainian freelance photojournalist based in Kyiv, originally from Berdyansk, in eastern Ukraine. He was deeply involved in the coverage of the Ukrainian Revolution of 2014 and then started covering the conflicts in Crimea and eastern Ukraine. His work has been published in: TIME, The New York Times, The Washington Post, Der Spiegel and Newsweek. He has worked with Yara Arts Group since 2016.

IHOR DIDENCHUK (sopilka/flute) is a multi-instrumentalist and a member of the band Go_A that represented Ukraine at Eurovision 2021 Song Contest to great acclaim this May. He has a personal collection of over 50 musical instruments. Ihor also researches Ukrainian folklore.

JULIAN KYTASTY (bandura) is a third generation *bandurist* following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather and is recognized for his performance of Ukrainian epic songs. He often works with Yara Arts Group, most recently on a series of virtual events exploring the life and work of NY bandurist Zinoviy Shtokalko. His work on Yara's *1917-2017 Tychyna, Zhadan, and the Dogs* earned him a NY Innovative Theater Award for best original score.

OKSANA LEBEDIVNA (literary manager) is a Fulbright Researcher from Ukraine at Pace University; Ph.D. Candidate at Yukhymenko Family Doctoral School of National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, expected 2022; M.A. in Philology (Theory, History, and Comparative Studies of the Ukrainian Language), 2015-2017; B.A. in Philology, 2011-2015.

MAKSYM LOZYNSKYJ (sound) is singer, songwriter, producer, and actor. His music is available on iTunes & Spotify under the name, Maksym Loz. He also starred in the major motion picture, *Hutsulka Ksenya*, now available to watch on Amazon. Currently, he's in the Berklee College of Music Masters program in music production.

CHRIS IGNACIO (Zoom 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

VIRTUAL FOREST SONG was 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 friends of Yara Arts Group.



Council on the Arts



NYC Cultural Affairs

Yara celebrates Lesia Ukrainka

Yara created three theatre pieces based on Lesia Ukrainka's play *Forest Song*: In 1993, Viriana Tkacz and Wanda Phipps created an award-winning English translation of the Ukrainian verse play and presented the first workshop at La MaMa. In the spring of 1994, Yara traveled to Lviv and created the bilingual "Yara's Forest Song," which was shown at the Kurbas Theatre in Lviv and at La MaMa. In 2013, Yara created the immersive "Fire Water Night" at La MaMa.

Last winter, Yara created virtual events about each of these versions. These include original participants, photos and video from the shows. They can be seen any time for free through links on www.yaraartsgroup.net

"Neruo on Fire" note to photograph:

Beauty is ubiquitous, found even in the most mysterious parts of the brain. The structure of a single brain cell, filled with a dye during an experiment, is reminiscent of the beauty we see in nature: vibrant coral, a majestic lightning bolt, or the intricate branching of a tree. The protrusions that extend from the body of a brain cell were so familiar at first discovery that scientists named them "dendrites," meaning "branches of a treelike structure" in Greek. Although they seem like two distant worlds, Art and Science have always been intertwined. Beauty in Nature is what Science explores and Art expresses.