



O. Koshetz Choir Remembers

Submitted by *Sylvia Todaschuk*



On Tuesday July 28, 2009 under threatening skies, the O. Koshetz Choir held its annual visit to Glen Eden Cemetery to remember former members and friends with a traditional Memorial service (Panakhyda) and reception. Strong among Ukrainian traditions is the sharing of food with those that have passed. In early Ukrainian Canadian culture, families often held picnics on the gravesites of those newly departed, so that the souls of those individuals may "dine" on the life we continue to lead. In Ukrainian churches, Panakhyda's are sung for departed loved ones, oftentimes with bread and fruit as an offering to the departed soul.

The Choir continues this annual tradition with members of the male chorus being joined by friends from Hoosli Folk Ensemble, all under the direction of William Solomon. Rev. Alexander Harkavyi of the Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral of St. Ivan Suchavsky led the service, with Deacon Victor Humniski and Deacon Michael Woroby, both of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, assisting.

There were in excess of 65 members and friends of the choir present, including guests from Ottawa and Australia. Those in attendance took the opportunity to fondly remember those individuals who have passed. Included in that list are Walter Klymkiw, long-time conductor, and Andrew Kuryk, a choir member who was taken in his prime.

At the time of his death, Andrew was enrolled at the School of Music at the University of Manitoba and had served on the Choir Executive in a number of capacities, including Treasurer.

Walter was the conductor of the choir from the mid 1950s until his death in 2000. Walter dedicated his life to Ukrainian Choral Music and was co-recipient, along with the Choir, of the Shevchenko Medal of Ukraine for his work promoting Ukrainian choral music worldwide.

Both gentlemen are remembered through scholarships that are annually awarded at the University of Manitoba's School of Music. The Andrew Kuryk Scholarship is awarded to a student demonstrating the leadership qualities and musical spirit that was Andrew, while the Walter Klymkiw Scholarship is awarded to students with interests in Ukrainian choral music as was Walter's passion. Both funds continue to accept donations in memory of these two outstanding musicians.

Our second exciting choral year under Miroslava Pach's leadership has launched with our appearance at Carpathia Credit Union's 70th Anniversary Concert and continues to include workshops with Ottawa-based conductor Laurence Ewashko, singing of our first Liturgy under Mira's direction, Oseredok's Annual Christmas concert, the Choir's Annual Fundraising Dinner and Draw (March 20, 2010) and our final year

end concert (either May 30, 2010 or June 6, 2010). In addition, the choir members will be participating in some new "Ukrainian Art and Music" events which will feature small ensembles performing works not heard before in Winnipeg, supplemented with a show and sale of Ukrainian folkloric art and embroidery from the collection and hands of Ken Romaniuk. These will be fund raising events, and are tentatively set for the weekend of November 20, 2009. We also anticipate that the O. Koshetz Chamber Choir will

continue developing its repertoire and participate in events as appropriate. In addition to all of this, we are preparing to travel to Ottawa in May 2010 and perform as part of the first annual "Ukrainian Day on Parliament Hill" and further into the future, as the choir reaches its 65th anniversary over 2010-2011, preliminary plans are underway to return to Ukraine.

If you are interested in obtaining more information or joining the choir, even for one or two events, contact Mira at mpaches@hotmail.com or 334-3510 to arrange for a meeting.

Ukrainian Canadian Events in Winnipeg are under the Ukrainian Canadian Congress - Provincial Council compiled by Sylvia Todaschuk 586-3445. (Please phone with further events in the Ukrainian community.)