

KOLIADNYKY sing the songs of the Koliada, a winter ritual that now coincides with Christmas, but long pre-dates it in some parts of Eastern Europe. They live in the village of Kryvorivnia, high in the Carpathian Mountains of western Ukraine, where the Koliada is considered to be the most important event of the year. Groups of male singers visit every household and sing a specially chosen song to each member of the family, both living and recently deceased. These ancient songs are thought to hold magical powers: spring will not come unless they are sung.

Instruments: The *trembita* (mountain horn) is made of a hollowed pine tree that has been struck by lightning and wrapped in birch bark. Fiddles for the Koliada are played in a special tuning. The musicians also play the *duda* (bagpipes made from a goat), *tsymbaly* (hammer dulcimer), *drymby* (jaw harps) and a variety of hand-made Carpathian flutes, including the *tylynka* (overtone flute).

IVAN ZELENCHUK, is the “bereza,” lead singer and leader of the Koliadnyky. He comes from an old Kryvorivnia family and was the village head, as well as the best known winter song singer. He is the son of Ivan Zelenchuk whose handwritten notebook of winter songs has helped to preserve this tradition for future generations despite the intense persecution under fifty years of Soviet rule in this area. Now in his sixties, Ivan considers his involvement in the *koliada* his personal mission. He met the members of Yara when they first visited the village in 2002 and took part in Yara’s *Koliada* workshop in Kyiv and shows in New York, Saratoga Springs, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Toronto.

MYKOLA ZELENCHUK, the son of Ivan, proudly carries on the tradition of his forefathers, both as a winter song singer and the best *trembita* (mountain long horn) player in the village. He also makes the traditional costumes for the winter song singers. He has taken part in Yara productions and was featured in *Still the River Flows*, *Winter Sun*, *Midwinter Night* and *Winter Light* in New York at La MaMa and in Toronto.

MYKOLA ILYUK is a master Carpathian fiddler and plays most of the traditional instruments of the Hutsuls, including the *duda* (bag pipes) and the *trembita*. He is the director of the renowned Hutsul instrumental ensemble and has his own museum of musical instruments from the area. He was the master fiddler for Yara’s *Winter Sun*, *Midwinter Night*, *Winter Light* and Koliada events in 2010-2016. He helped create the music for Yara’s show with Shumka Dancers.

VASYL TYMCHUK comes from a musical family in Zamahory and learned to play *tsymbaly* from the renowned musician Shepatiuk. Today he leads the children’s ensemble of Hutsul music in Verkhovyna School and is proud to be passing on his musical knowledge to the next generation. He has worked with Yara since 2010.

OSTAP KOSTYUK is from a Kosmach family and learned to play flute and *duda* from the legendary Mykhailo Tafiychuk. He directs the Hutsul ensemble Bai, which won first prize two years ago at the Festival of Traditional Music in Verkhovyna. He graduated from the University of Lviv and directs the award-winning *Living Fire*, about traditional sheep herders. He was featured in Yara’s *Winter Sun*, *Midwinter Night*, *Winter Light* and performed in the 2010 -2016 Koliada events.

YARA ARTS GROUP began its collaboration with traditional artists from the Carpathians in 1995. In 2003 and 2004, Yara artists recorded the winter song ritual in Kryvorivnia and the surrounding villages. Yara is a resident company at La MaMa Experimental Theatre in New York. Since 1990 Yara has created 35 international collaborative cultural projects with traditional artists from Eastern Europe and Siberia.

MARINA CELANDER is a theatre artist, singer, dancer, living in NYC. She received the Pan Asian Repertory Theatre’s Red Socks Award for her contribution to Asian American theatre 2014; and was nominated for the Innovation In Performance Award for her solo show at Stockholm Fringe Festival 2016. Marina’s solo show *Mermaid’s Howl* was shown at LaMama ETC’s Series of One Solo Festival 2018; and Stockholm Fringe 2016; *Shakespeare’s Sisters* was shown at Dixon Place (2017) and Estrogenius Festival (2019). Marina has worked with Yara Arts Group since 2000.

CHRIS IGNACIO is a Filipino-American theatre artist, musician, puppeteer, producer and educator. He has toured nationally and abroad since graduating from The Boston Conservatory at Berklee, performing everything from Broadway to Off-Off-Broadway and all the fun in between. He is a Culture Push Fellow for Utopian Practice, and Queens Council on the Arts: Community Engagement Commissioning grantee for his self-produced project *Co-written*, which involves collaborative songwriting with young people of color.

AKIKO HIROSHIMA performed in *Flights of the White Bird*, *Circle*, *Song Tree*, *Kupala* (in Kyiv), and *Fire Water Night*. Other Theatre: Kim in *Miss Saigon*; Sadako in *A Thousand Cranes*; Peppermint Patty in *You’re A Good Man, Charlie Brown*; Sieh King King in Fred Ho’s *Warrior Sisters*; Teruko in *Tea*; Aiko in *Fishing for Wives*; *Jesus Christ Superstar*; *Pippin*. Films: Yuri Kochiyama in *Lest We Forget* by Emmy winning director Jason DaSilva, leading roles in independent and student films. Commercials, voiceover and prints: Intel, GE, Sprint, Amstel Beer, Audible, MoMA, Chicago Tourism, and Japanese language textbooks.

TATYANA KOT was born in the Soviet Union, trained to be a ballerina, studied History & Archaeology in the university. Breast cancer survivor. Best actress winner at Planet Connections theater festivity, Midtown international theater festival and First prize at Secondo Theater festival (Zurich, Switzerland). Company member of Blessed Unrest: *Doruntine* (Zurich-2016, NYC-2015), *Body* (2015&2016), *Christmas Carol* (2013), *Euridyce’s Dream* (2013). Company member of Nylon Fusion theater company: *Marina*, *Mata Hari*, *Snowfall in Berlin*, *The Chaplin Plays*. A VR immersive documentary about her life with cancer NORMAL DAY was internationally released in 2018.

MAKSYM LOZYNSKYI is singer, songwriter, producer, and actor. He has written, produced, and performed the music on his two studio albums, available on iTunes and Spotify under the name, Maksym Loz. He is currently in the process of writing his 3rd album. He has performed in various venues which include Lincoln Center, the United Nations, and the Kyiv National Opera. He also starred in the major motion picture, musical romantic comedy, “Hutsulka Ksenia.”

DARIEN FLORINO is a junior at Cornell University studying environmental science and performing arts. He was last seen on the La Mama stage in Yara’s “1917/2017: Tychyna, Zhadan, and the Dogs,” and has worked on many other Yara productions since. Other notable roles include Hank Williams in Leigh Fondakowski’s “Spill” and Iachimo in Shakespeare’s “Cymbeline.”

JULIAN KYTASTY is a third-generation *bandurist* whose music combines a mastery of traditional styles with a distinctly contemporary sensibility. Based in New York City, he has performed at venues from Carnegie Hall to the steps of a village church in Brazil. He has created music for theatre with Yara Arts Group, for films and for modern dance.

JOANNA MIELESZKO is a NYC-bred Polish-American mezzosoprano and conductor whose musical endeavors oscillate between preserving the (very) old and pioneering the daringly new. In addition to her solo work, she directs and regularly performs with Ukrainian Village Voices, Anglica Antiqua, AEON Ensemble, among others as an active freelancer.

UKRAINIAN VILLAGE VOICES (Joanna Mielezsko, Ulana Pryjmak, Iryna Voloshyna & Ezra Halleck) is a New York City-based collective of Ukrainian and non-Ukrainian singers, whose mission is to preserve and revive the polyphonic singing style of Ukraine’s villages www.ukrainianvillagevoices.com

VIRLANA TKACZ (director/co-translator) is the artistic director of Yara Arts Group, a resident theatre company at La MaMa. She has created 32 original theatre pieces that have premiered at La MaMa and have been performed in Kyiv, Lviv, Kharkiv, Bishkek, Ulan Ude, and Ulan Bator, as well as the villages of the Buryat Aga Region of Siberia and China. She received the NEA Translation Fellowship for her work on the poetry of Serhiy Zhadan which was recently long-listed for the PEN Award for Poetry in Translation.

WANDA PHIPPS (poetry co-translator) is a writer living in Brooklyn. Her publications include the books *Field of Wanting: Poems of Desire* and *Wake-Up Calls: 66 Morning Poems*. Her poetry has been translated into Ukrainian, Hungarian, Arabic, Galician and Bangla. A founding member of Yara, she has collaborated on numerous theatrical productions presented in Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, Siberia, and at La MaMa. www.mindhoney.com

WATOKU UENO (set designer) is a founding member of Yara Arts Group. He has designed most of Yara's shows and directed Yara's *Sundown* and *After the Rain*. For over twenty-five years he has traveled with Yara to Ukraine, Siberia, Mongolia and Kyrgyzstan to create original theatre pieces by collaborating with local artists. He is a recipient of NEA/TCG design fellowship and was nominated for the American Theatre Wing Design Award. With Ping Chong & Co. he designed *Deshima*, *After Sorrow*, *Pojagi* and *Secret History*. He is also the recipient of several NYSCA theatre design commissions.

JEFF NASH (lighting designer) is pleased to be working with the Yara Arts Group again, having designed the lighting for their production *Fire Water Night* and *Tychyna, Zhadan and the Dogs* here at La MaMa. Recent productions: Anna Kohler's *Mytho? Lure of Wildness* at Abrons Arts Center; John Jesurun's *Shadowland* (La Mama), *Stopped Bridge of Dreams* (La Mama), *Liz One* (Chocolate Factory), *Firefall* (DTW), and *Philoktetes* (Soho Rep, Brussels, Berlin); Fiona Templeton's *Non Sequitur* (TheaterLab); Juliet Mapp's *The Making of Americans* (DTW); UTC 61's *The Pig, The Lathe of Heaven*, and *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (all at 3LD); Kirkwood Bromley's *Me and No More Pretending* (Ohio Theater).

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* and *Hitting Bedrock*, and *Tychyna, Zhadan and the Dogs*. Currently she is working as a dresser for Broadway shows. She is also a Kimono dresser.

SHIGEKO SARA SUGA (Movement): has been working with Yara Arts Group since "BILIND SIGHT" 1992 and grateful to Yara for taking me to far lands of Ukraine and to Kyrgyzstan several occasions to work with the local artists. Shigeiko is also a member of The Great Jones Repertory of La Mama and has just performed in TROJAN WOMEN at La Mama. She will be working in ENDLINGS at NYTW in 2020. <http://www.shigekosuga.com>

NADIA TATCHYN (stage manager) has worked with Yara Arts Group on numerous shows since 2011 including: *Raven*, *Dream Bridge*, *Midwinter Night*, *Fire Water Night*, *Winter Light*, *Hitting Bedrock* and *Tychyna, Zhadan and the Dogs*.

Upcoming events details www.yaraartsgroup.net

This event is made possible by public funds from New York State Council on the Arts, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, New York City Council member Carlina Rivera, as well as the Self-Reliance (NY) FCU, MEEST Company, La MaMa Experimental Theatre and Yara Arts Group's numerous friends and donors. The Koliadnyky have found a home in NY thanks to Ellen Stewart and La MaMa Experimental Theatre.



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Yara Arts Group and Koliadnyky from Kryvorivnya presents

WINTER SONGS ON MARS



The Koliadnyky collaboration with Yara culminates in a new theatre piece "*Winter Songs on Mars*" created and directed by Virlana Tkacz at La MaMa Experimental Theatre in New York. "*Winter Songs on Mars*" interweaves the Koliada traditional songs with an 18th century Baroque Nativity play ("Vertep"), and scenes from a fantastical dream.

December 20, 2019
La MaMa Experimental Theatre
66 East 4th Street, New York City