

In 2005 The Washington Group Cultural Fund continued to find new ways to fulfill its mission: to nurture and promote Ukrainian culture in the Washington, D.C. area. The Cultural Fund's main vehicle to accomplish this remains its Sunday Music Concert series. In the 2004-2005 season the concert series, which as usual takes place in The Lyceum in Old Town, Virginia, began on February 13th with a performance of Marianna Sadowska, a singer from Ukraine whose unique singing style and choice of repertoire gave the audience a rare glimpse into the world of traditional Ukrainian folk singing.

On May 13th, Juliana Osinchuk, a pianist based in Alaska, made a repeat performance within the Cultural Fund's concert series and delighted the audience with her easy style and informative introductions to each piece she performed. The following concert, on May 22, featured the Cerberus Piano trio: Mykola Suk (piano), Byron Tauchi (violin) and Andrew Smith (cello). They performed music of Myroslav Skoryk, Ildebrando Pizzetti and Antony Arensky.

The concert series continued in the fall of 2005 with a performance of The Continuum ensemble. On October 16th, A trio of performers from the larger ensemble acquainted the audience with music composed by contemporary Ukrainian composers, whose works are rarely performed in the United States. The unusual repertoire consisted of works by Valentin Bibik, Valentin Silvestrov, Virko Baley (a Ukrainian American) and Leonid Hrabovsky, among others.

The final concert in the Sunday music series was presented on November 12, but not without a bit of drama. The Cultural Fund had hoped to feature a young Ukrainian violinist, Maxim Brylinsky, who - with his duo partner, a harpsichordist, is based in Paris. Unfortunately a week before he was scheduled to fly from Paris to perform in Washington, Brylinsky was taken seriously ill and was forced to cancel. The Cultural Fund, however, managed to make sure that "the show went on" and quickly found a substitute for Brylinsky. The November concert featured Solomiya Ivakhiv, a young violinist from Lviv, who won a full scholarship to study at the famous Curtis Institute of Music. The concert was a great success notwithstanding the last minute substitution.

In addition to its music series, the Cultural Fund held a number of other events in 2005. On January 27th, a renowned USA jazz expert and radio personality, Larry Applebaum, was invited to lecture about his recent trip to Ukraine during which he researched the world of Ukrainian jazz. And on May 26, the Cultural Fund organized an exhibit of woodcuts by Jacques Hnizdovsky, one of the foremost woodcut artists in the United States. During the exhibit and reception, which took place in the Ukrainian Embassy, guests had an opportunity to purchase the woodcuts on display.

The year ended with the Cultural Fund assisting the American Immigration Law Foundation by putting up a Christmas tree decorated in the traditional Ukrainian style. The tree was a part of the Foundation's holiday exhibit entitled 'An Immigrant Christmas' and was on display in the Foundation's building on F St during the last two weeks of December.

There was a change of personnel in the Cultural Fund in July, 2005. Svitlana Fedko Shiells, who had just taken over as the Fund Director from Laryssa Courtne a mere 9 months prior, in October of 2004, moved with her family to Vienna, Austria, where her husband took on a new professional challenge. That left the Cultural Fund with its own challenge: finding a new Director. I agreed to take over this position and follow Laryssa and Svitlana's footsteps. Sudden changes are never easy and I would like to thank all the members of the Cultural Fund for their enthusiasm and support during the time of transition. All TWGCF members are volunteers and they generously give of their time, energy and good advice. Without the following people it would not be possible to present high quality events, which have become a hallmark of the Cultural Fund: Theresa Ben, Lesia Bihun, Yaro Bihun, (our indispensable technical guru) Nadia Diuk, Chrystyna Kinal, Larysa Kurylas, Ksenia Kuzmych, Chrystia Sonevtsky, Daria Stec, Marta Legeckis, Marika Jurach, (Secretary) Svitlana Shevchenko, Chrystia Balko, Laryssa Courtney, Bohadana Urbanovych, Slavko Novytsky, Rosalie Norair (Treasurer). In all our endeavors the Cultural Fund is greatly assisted by the Embassy of Ukraine and especially the Cultural Attaché of the Embassy of Ukraine, Natalya Holub. Our deepest thanks to her.

Marta Zielyk
Director, TWG Cultural Fund

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