

My Ukrainian Experience

By: *Bozena Hrycyna*

Thinking about what I could contribute to **СТУДЕНТ** I thought back to my year living in Ukraine as a starting point. I've been back for two months already, yet my memories of Ukraine are still vivid and fresh. I can't let go, and for good reason. I had an absolutely amazing time working, travelling, discovering and exploring.



Bozena Hrycyna standing by a streetcar on the roads of Kyiv. Because of their slower speeds, riding the tram is a great way to tour a city.

It's easy to list off the reasons why I loved living in Ukraine, specifically Lviv. Lviv is a great place for a young, independent person to enjoy for the same reasons that I imagine any small European city is - it's walk-able, it's charming, it's got cheap and plentiful public transportation, it's artsy, it's beautiful, it's old, it has cafes and squares and public spaces where people can meet and chat... The list is quite long. But aside from these important factors, living in Lviv was also satisfying and fulfilling for me simply because it was in Ukraine. I was living in the country my grandparents were forced to abandon for political reasons.

I got to experience what life in Ukraine is like today; what Ukrainians are like today; who they are without all the cultural decorations used as identifying markers in the Diaspora. I also had the opportunity to hear Ukrainian as it is spoken today, with all its russification, borrowed English terms, and surzhyk slang. Speaking Ukrainian and being immersed in the language was one of my key motives for moving to Lviv and one of my biggest thrills was learning new Ukrainian words and properly inserting mod-

ern slang into my speech. I didn't succeed in losing my Diaspora accent, but I learned to adapt some of my vocabulary choices. Mostly I learned how to adapt in every aspect of my life.

Living in Ukraine is all about being flexible and willing to adapt. There are a lot of things that make life in Ukraine difficult and unpredictable. I had to get used to cold showers sometimes, locks that jammed, marshrutka rides that tested all my patience and olfactory endurance, lack of information about buses and trains. I also had to get used to plans changing at the drop of a hat. All this made me feel more confident in myself, in my ability to withstand small inconveniences and remain unfazed by them. And if something really got to me or if something ever went really bad, well at least I got a good story out of it, and an excuse to go have a beer.

Actually, I appreciated having inconveniences in my life that were so minimal, they made me realize how soft Canadians are, how much energy and money they waste just to make their lives more convenient. Food preparation is one of these things. North Americans will do anything to cut down the time they spend preparing food. What a waste of money all those frozen pizzas and pre-cooked dinners are. Food prepared with fresh natural ingredients increases one's quality of life. Making food takes effort and time but it gives a person time to unwind, think, enjoy good music or conversation and in the end, produces something worthy of enjoyment.

Any good memory I have of Ukraine involves some delicious food made with smetana, garlic or dill. One of the sweetest memories I have

is of a simple meal I was graciously served in a village monastery that consisted of steaming hrechka (buckwheat), fried eggs and home-made cheese. It was the simplest meal I could imagine but I will never forget it. The eggs came from the chickens running around just outside the kitchen; the cheese was from the cows grazing not too far away. Made with love, by a gracious sister hosting my friend and I, the food was heavenly.

After living in Ukraine, simple pleasures like homemade cheese and free range eggs have taken on an even greater meaning for me. I think I was able to fully appreciate such simple things, because of Ukraine's culture. At its core it is a peasant culture, and I mean this in the most positive sense. Pleasure is to be had in the most basic things: sharing hearty food, strong horilka, accompanied by lively music. In the presence of good friends, enjoying these things is so easy and so satisfying. Despite all the other wonderful aspects of living in Ukraine, and all the bad ones too, what truly made it a special and unique experience for me was the simple appreciation for everyday ordinary goodness. Life in Ukraine can and usually is very challenging, but I will always remember that bowl of borscht with fresh dill, cold beers on Ploscha Rynok, a night of singing in the park, shashlyk, horilka and dark chocolate.



The Good People

By Marco Jacuta

The Ukrainian neo-folk band called Ludy Dobri (translation good people) has arrived – well at Pearson International Airport that is. But it has also arrived musically as the village-raised Ukrainian musicians recently completed their first full length album. While their instruments arrived safely, less musical items...like strong Russian cigarettes and newspaper-wrapped vodka landed safely as well.

They came to Toronto for their first out of country trip and performance to promote and expose others to their music. Their newly released album titled “Tupotila Tupotila” is essentially, a collection and interpretation of Ukrainian folk music from all different regions of Ukraine. It doesn't sound like your standard stereotypical Ukrainian song, paying attention to one particular region, but a collection of lyrics and melodies from all parts of Ukraine. Their album is a new and fresh interpretation of old folk songs that in many cases haven't had a chance to make it out of their localized areas. It echoes the sounds of small villages or the long lost sounds of small recordings left over that haven't had the chance to transcend borders. The rise of international folk music in the past decade warrants the expansion of Ukrainian folk beyond its geographical borders. Ludy Dobri is the band to break these barriers, just as they have in Ukraine.

The band's members are from different geographic roots - Khmelnytsky, Poltava, Lviv, and Mark Ihnatowycz as the only Canadian in the

band - but are musically diverse as well. Some members studied at the conservatory while others are self taught. They mix standard and non-standard classical, punk, Balkan and Ukrainian Folk, rock, and jazz.

They seek to re-envision traditional Ukrainian folk music, unearthing fading forms and reformatting well known classics. They bring different musical elements to their rehearsals and attempt to interpret these songs to try to create something new. The culmination of which is a really thick, energetic and youthful pulse and can be heard on their debut album. Not bad for the street busking band from Lviv. Whether or not that makes them more or less appealing is still a wonder, but what's certain is that their recordings do not nearly do their live performances justice.



Their eccentricity and energy helped to knock a crowd off their feet recently as they tore up a night club in downtown Toronto with their performance.



The story behind producing “Tupotila Tupotila” is that of any other musician or band, which meant it involved a lot busking on the streets or taking any opportunity they had to fund the album. The faith that the Ukrainian Diaspora in Canada had in them as well went a long way in fundraising efforts to help produce the album. Faith came in the form that Ludy Dobri are doing something completely different, in that they’re not a punk or rock band, but trying to maintain the traditional aesthetics with acoustic instruments. They go deep into well known melodies, but also try to broaden the conceptions of Ukrainian culture. They aim to bring people something that they haven’t heard, but still play within a traditional framework.

Travel Guide: Places to Stay in Munich and Przemyśl

Travel information may be found at www.susk.ca/resources

Student residence in Peremyshl (Przemyśl)

Father Julian Kowal (jkowal@wp.pl , tel. 0048166707130) has opened up his monastery to Ukrainian students (guys and girls) for very little (20-30 zł). The monastery is right in the city core, and can be found easily: the church has a massive bronze capella that is visible from almost anywhere in the core and riverfront.

Address for search:

Zakon w. Bazylego Wielkiego Ulica Selezjanska 2, 37-700 Przemyśl, Poland

Student residence in Munich

Director Marika Ficak (call almost anytime: 011-49-89-361-54-73) runs the Ukrainian School / Український Інтернат in Munich, Germany. For 20 Euro a night, you will have your own bed, and depending on your arrangements, your own refrigerator, sink and a German breakfast. Bathrooms are shared, but clean and with plenty of hot water.

The best part of staying here is meeting people. First, this is the usual place for Ukrainians from Ukraine and Poland to stay cheaply while studying at Munich Technical or the Ukrainian Free University, so there are plenty of students to talk to. Second, Союз Українських Студентів Німеччини (www.sus-n.org, the SUSK of Germany) has its headquarters in the basement of the Internat (dormitory). When I was there, I lucked out and the students had a diskoteka.

Address Isarring 11. Take the U-bahn to Nordfreidhof, take the small streets south-east to the bridge across Isarring (which is confusingly, inside another street) cross the bridge and turn right. Warning: if you ask a local, they may direct you to a S-Bahn station in the suburbs by the airport with a similar name – do not go there!



Grave of Stepan Bandera in Munich



Wodoslawsky standing at attention beside the grave of Stepan Bandera in the Waldfriedhof ("forest cemetery"). Stepan Bandera was a leader of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, which fought against both Nazis and Communists during World War II. Find the instruction to find his grave at www.susk.ca.

Stepan Bandera is one of the founders of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army that fought Nazi's and Communists during WWII. He was assassinated in Munich, so now he is buried in Waldfriedhof ("forest cemetery"). Take tram 54 west from the U-bahn station Harras to Fürstenrieder Strasse. Walk south until you reach a gate

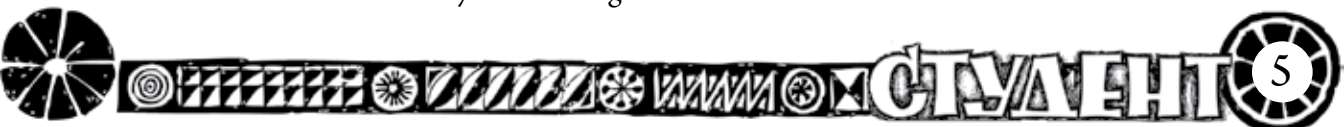
(Fürstenrieder Str. 288, 81377 München) on the west side. His is a big white cross at block number 43 or 47 in the Alter Teil (old section) in the northern part.

Do you have a secret place in Europe that you'd like to share? Submit your blurb to miwanek@ryerson.ca

Universtiy of Calgary Kickoff Event

The University of Calgary Ukrainian Student's Society held its 2009 Kickoff and Varenyky Eating Competition on October 2nd. The event was a great success with some 35 members attending. Students enjoyed some good old varenyky, kovbasa and Ukrainian music. Many new friends were made and the event ended off with the club's 2nd annual varenyky eating contest. This competition lived up to expectations as four brave kozaks faced off in a heated race to scoff down their share of varenyky. Quickest off the Mark was Robbie "Lightning" Romanchuck-Edwards who had the better part of 7 varenyky stuffed in his mouth within the first 15 seconds. Unfortunately for the early frontrunner, transferring the food from mouth to stomach proved not as easy a task. The rest of the field quickly gained ground. Defending champion Andriy "Drought" Butynets was left in the dust. It was Ben "Tortoise" Grubes who proved the smartest, employing the "slow and steady wins the race" strategy to overcome and be crowned 2009 Ukrainian Student's Society Varenyky Eating Champion. The Club Executive would like to thank everyone for coming out and are all looking forward to an excellent year with many more fun events.

Budmo!



MUSA Executives

The McGill Ukrainian Students' Association (MUSA) has elected a 2009-2010 executive! Congratulations to Stephan Mota, our new President! This year he will have the pleasure of working with Nicholas Saldan (VP Finance), Alyssa Paterson (Fundraiser), Marta Cybulsky (Secretary), Tanya Bednarczyk (Public Relations), Artem Luhovy (Electronic Editor), Alexander Labrosse (VP Sports) and Anastasia Whalen (Past-President).

Ukrainian Students' Club at Ryerson

Ryerson University finally has its very own Ukrainian Club! The new and first executive in decades is filled with people with lots of energy and excitement about this upcoming year. Ryerson once had a Ukrainian Club around the 70s however it fell inactive and was later replaced by a Russian-Ukrainian Club. After approaching the club this year and working with their executives, they decided to split the group to make way for USC at Ryerson. Give us a shout at usc@ryerson.ca or Ukrainian Students' Club @ Ryerson on Facebook. Chekayemo na vas!

Окрадена Земля: Genocide Revealed

The newly released documentary film on the 1932-1933 famine-genocide in Soviet Ukraine called Окрадена Земля, is being premiered in various Canadian cities. The Ukrainian-language documentary is based on new archival material, eye-witness accounts and commentaries by historians, writers and researchers. The film, produced and directed by Yuriy Luhovy, captures the broad scope of Stalin's genocidal policies against the Ukrainian nation. Prof. Roman Serbyn, a specialist on the Holodomor, called Окрадена Земля "the best documentary on the famine-genocide." The film is under the patronage of the World Congress of Ukrainians and endorsed by UCC National. Former SUSK media director, Adriana Luhovy was a cameraperson on the film's production, filming in former famine-stricken areas in Eastern Ukraine.

Check on Facebook (Окрадена Земля - Genocide Revealed) or with your local UCC to know where and when it's being shown. To arrange a screening at your university, contact yurij@yluhovy.com or call (514) 481 5871. An English-language version is in production. Donations of \$3,000 or more are provide with a credit in the film.



Being a Grad Student or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love My Thesis

By Motria Spolsky

Your undergrad degree in hand, you've decided to delay adult life and have joined the ranks of grad students. Congratulations! Your life will soon be filled with fascinating courses, professors you can talk to for hours on end... and a thesis. Although many programs now offer course-work options, the lure of researching and writing about an original idea is still strong. And the beginning is exciting; all your ideas swirling in your head as you enthusiastically explain your genius idea to anyone who will listen. Fast forward a few months, and you've become so good at dodging that dreaded "How's your thesis going?" question, you wish they'd make it an Olympic sport.

But there's hope! Despite moments of discomfort, you can indeed enjoy the thesis-writing process. I present to you, soon-to-be thesis writer, five key pieces of advice.

1. Don't pick a topic based on your professor's recommendation. Don't pick a topic you wrote an A paper on in undergrad. Don't even pick a topic you're interested in. DO pick a subject you're passionate about. You'll be stuck with it for a few months (or more!) and you'll need to revisit the beginning a few times asking yourself why you're doing this. Make sure it's because you love what you're writing about.
2. Find a professor you get along with and who will tell you the truth. You will be spending many hours discussing with your advisor, and the less you want to avoid him or her, the more painless the process will be.
3. Make sure you understand the concept of self-discipline. Your deadlines will be few and far apart, and it will often be up to you to enforce them. If you had a hard time sticking to deadlines in your undergrad, realize that you are about to begin a period of self-torture. Or at the very least, a long thesis-writing process.
4. Keep things in perspective. Remember that you're not the first person to write a thesis. Not to say that your work is any less important than that of the first thesis-writer, but you're not alone in what you're trying to accomplish. Your advisor will help you. He won't let you go to your defense if he's not convinced you'll pass. Likewise, the thesis committee is not out to get you. Their goal is to ensure you've done a thorough job of researching your topic, not to identify you as a fraudulent academic. So do your best, and realize everyone else is hoping you'll do your best too.
5. Don't forget to have a life. Yes, you want to focus on the thesis. Yes, you want to finish writing before this year's frosh graduate. But sanity is one of the keys to a good, coherent thesis, so find out how to keep yours. Play a sport, learn a language, and go out with friends... Stick to hibernating only when absolutely necessary, and don't punish yourself if you're a bit behind schedule.



Although you don't always have control over these five areas – maybe the only professor who understands your topic is the one who failed you in first year – but the more you stick to them, the more likely you are to enjoy the process. After all, once you're done and defended, it's time to stop avoiding the world of adults and get a job. Or sign up for another five years and a PhD.

Lito in the Canadian Karpaty

By Anastasia and Maryna Rolland

Both are currently in their first year at the University of Alberta.

As we all know, there are many Ukrainians within our communities in Alberta. In fact, Alberta has the highest density of Ukrainians in all of Canada. Some Ukrainians here are more involved in the community than others, but let me tell you how many Ukrainian youth in Canada spend their summers - we go to camp.

The camp that I attended this year (along with some 250 others) is organized by the Ukrainian youth group called Plast. Plast is an organization that runs all over the world, teaching youth about our culture, music, some basic survivor skills, and most importantly, to appreciate the nature around us. Participants of Plast get together once a week to organize events, help the community and generally just to do Ukrainian things with other Ukrainian people. Every summer, they organize summer camps for the kids involved. However, the camp this year was very special. Every four years or so, all of the participants from across Canada come together to

form one, big camp. It is called KPZ – Kraiova Plastova Zuztrich or National Plast Jamboree. This year the camps were held in Jasper (for those between the ages of 12 and 15) and in Kootenay, BC (for those between 15 and 18). The portion that was in the mountains was 10 days long with another two nights spent in Edmonton. During the Edmonton portion, the kids were taken to a preserved Ukrainian pioneer village.

KPZ is a wonderful chance for Ukrainian youth all over Canada to meet each other and connect over such an experience. As a participant of the camp in Kootenay, I can say that it was a huge success, and I enjoyed myself incredibly. I am very proud to say that on the organizing committee were five from Edmonton, including Daria and Walter Horbay, Khrystia Teterenko, Anya Slevinska, Oles Lazurko and Mykhajlo Hanzch from Calgary.

When most people think of summer camp, they think of cabins on the lake, making crafts, canoeing, and playing sports. This is not that kind of camp. I would say that going to Plast camp is the closest I will ever come to actually being in the wild. Not to say this is a bad thing, it's just an experience. We camp in actual tents, we have no running water or electricity, and we have to make our own food. It really helps to put the life of luxury we have in the city into perspective. On the first day that we arrived, we really only had time to set up our tents and eat dinner, and then it was straight to bed. The next day, we departed for our first hike. My group had it easy, we only had to hike eight kilometers. But some



had to hike 10-12 kilometers, and to make it worse, it rained throughout the day. After this hike, we were sure we were going to get some rest, but low and behold, a two-day hike lay before us the morning after. Unfortunately, my group was given the longest and most difficult hike called the Rockwall. It spans 40 kilometers and 800 meters in elevation. Although it

camp, we spent much of our time playing sports such as Frisbee and soccer, learning about our history and about wildlife, and spent countless hours sitting by the fire singing songs together. It was wonderful to relax for those few days.

On Thursday morning, we left Kootenay for Edmonton, where a zabava took place. It was held



was tough, I wouldn't have traded it for another hike. The views were absolutely breathtaking. After many hours of hiking, we finally made it back to our base camp at Crooks' Meadow and were so relieved to hear that not only were we going to go to have a shower the next day, but also that we would not have to go on a hike for another three days. During our time at the

at the Lions Senior Citizens Center. We ate dinner as soon as we got there. Everyone was starving. After dinner, the bands started playing. The bands that played were Euphoria and Zorepad, which include our own Edmonton Plastuny. Everyone was dancing and singing and having a great time. It was by far the most fun night!



The next day, it was off to the Ukrainian Heritage village. At the village, we spent the day learning about our culture and participated in several activities that showed us how our ancestors lived. We mud plastered part of a barn, helped plant trees, washed the train tracks and helped to cut down trees. The down side was that it was raining all day so we got really muddy, but it was all done in good spirits. The most interesting part of the day for me was that Brian Cherwick, ethnomusicologist at the University of Alberta, came and showed us the musical instruments that our ancestors would have played. He played several songs for us. I am so amazed by the amount of instruments he knows how to play. Later that day, Andrew Hladyshevsky, president of the Ukrainian Canadian Foundation of Taras Shevchenko, gave us a very moving talk about that internment of Ukrainians in Canada. He showed us several news articles that displayed the unspeakable hate Canadians had for our people. After we left the village, we went back to Lister Hall for one final campfire. I felt very sad that this was going to be our very last night together. Saturday morning came sooner than I expected. We had our closing ceremony, said our goodbyes, and then it was time to go back into the real world.

I have to say that when I left Edmonton, I did not have high hopes for this camp. I thought that I would be totally miserable all the time, and that I would always have this nagging feeling that I needed my home. There were times where I thought I was going to break down from the lack of a shower or a filling meal but I have to admit, on my last night, during “stika”

(when we take turns during the night to watch over the camp and make sure no bears come), I was really sad to be leaving. I had spent the night talking with Alex from Toronto and Larissa from Montreal and it made me realize how much fun I really had. I met all of these really cool people, some of whom I still keep in touch with and I had all of these really amazing experiences. Nothing that I did at camp would have ever happened to me without this experience. Thank you mother, for forcing me to go.

**HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY?
HAVE SOMETHING TO PROVE?
WE WANT TO HEAR IT!**

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FUTURE EVENTS:
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