

## [The Enduring Resonance of Carol of the Bells: Ukrainian Origins and Musical Contexts](#)

Discussion published by John Vsetecka on Tuesday, November 29, 2022



**November 30, 2022**

**12-1:30PM**

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## Location Note

**1219 International Affairs Building  
420 W 118th Street, 12th floor**

**This is a hybrid (in-person/virtual) event. Registration required for attendance. Please note that all attendees must follow Columbia's [COVID-19 Policies and Guidelines](#). Columbia University is committed to protecting the health and safety of its community. To that end, all visiting alumni and guests must meet the University requirement of full vaccination status in order to attend in-person events. Vaccination cards may be checked upon entry to all venues. All other attendees may participate virtually on Zoom or YouTube.**

Please join the Ukrainian Studies Program at the Harriman Institute for **The Enduring Resonance of Carol of the Bells: Ukrainian Origins and Musical Contexts**.

In honor of the centennial celebration of the first performance of Mykola Leontovych's "Shchedryk" (known to most Americans as "Carol of the Bells") in North America at New York City's Carnegie Hall, this panel will explore the historical context of the composed song, the tour that brought it to the United States, and its legacy as a cultural treasure of the United States and Ukraine. Panelists **Maria Sonevtsky**, with contributions from **Prof. Yevhen Yefremov**, will discuss the folk music that inspired Leontovych's composition; **Marika Kuzma** will offer background on Ukrainian choral history and its place within the context of Western European repertoires; **Leah Batstone** will outline the early modernist milieu of Leontovych and other composers in his sphere; and **Tina Peresunko** will provide a short history of the Ukrainian Republic Capella tour and the global response to its singers. **Tetyana Filevska** will speak about the role of this song in intercultural relationship between Ukraine and USA. [Mark Andryczyk](#) (Harriman Institute) will moderate. Cosponsored by Institute Leontovych and the Ukrainian Contemporary Music Festival.

## Panelists

**Leah Batstone** is a musicologist working at the intersections of art music, politics, and philosophy in Central and Eastern Europe. She currently holds a postdoctoral fellowship from the University of Vienna's REWIRE Programme, a Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions project COFUND supported by the European Commission. She received her PhD in musicology from McGill University and holds a Master's in musicology from the University of Oxford. Her first book *Mahler's Nietzsche: Politics and Philosophy in the Wunderhorn Symphony* is forthcoming with Boydell & Brewer.

Conductor **Marika Kuzma** has led concerts around the world—Kyiv, Montreal, New York, Vienna—and has collaborated with artists and ensembles including Gustavo Dudamel and the Simon Bolivar Orquesta, Mark Morris Dance Group, Nicolas McGegan and Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Kent Nagano and the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, Christian Reif and the Berkeley Symphony. She directed choirs at the University of California, Berkeley, for some twenty-five years, where she also taught classes in conducting and in music history. A scholar of Slavic music, she

has published articles in the *Choral Journal* and *Journal of Musicology*, given talks at the Kyiv and Moscow conservatories and across America, published a critical edition of Bortniansky choral concertos (Carus International), and made several recordings of works by Bortniansky (Naxos International), Dychko, and others. She has also appeared as an actor onstage and in film. [marikakuzmamusician.com](http://marikakuzmamusician.com)

**Maria Sonevtsky** is Associate Professor of Anthropology and Music at Bard College. Her research focuses on post-Soviet Ukraine, where she has pursued interests including folklore revivals after state socialism and the effects of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster on the revival of rural musical repertoires. In 2011, to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear catastrophe, she founded the Chernobyl Songs Project: Living Culture from a Lost World, a public ethnomusicology program that sought to broaden awareness about the cultural impact of nuclear disaster by reviving ritual song repertoires from rural communities near the accident site that had dispersed after 1986. The project culminated with multimedia performances in four cities and a Smithsonian Folkways recording. She is the author of *Wild Music: Sound and Sovereignty in Ukraine* (2019), winner of the Lewis Lockwood Award from the American Musicological Society; journal articles in *Music & Politics*, *Public Culture*, *The World of Music*, and *Journal of Popular Music Studies*; and several book chapters. Other areas of interest include critical organology, the science of musical instruments; and Soviet children's music. Sonevtsky is also an accordionist, vocalist, and pianist. She taught at Bard for several years beginning in 2014 and then taught in the Music Department at the University of California, Berkeley.

**Yevhen Yefremov** is Professor of Ethnomusicology at the Kyiv Academy of Music. His role in the revival of regional Ukrainian folkloric repertoires that were ignored or censored during the Soviet era cannot be underestimated. Since 1979, he has led the Kyivan group "Drevo," the first urban Ukrainian folklore group to practice what is often called "avtentyka," a style and practice that seeks to maintain the heterogeneity and liveliness of traditional rural repertoires. Professor Yefremov's doctoral research in Kyivan Polissia led him to work with the State Emergency Service of Ukraine (MHC) after the Chornobyl catastrophe of 1986; in that capacity, he continued researching the traditional repertoires from that region, and studied the song practices of many resettled villagers in their post-Chornobyl homes. In 2011, he directed Hilka, the NYC-based choir featured in The Chernobyl Songs Project (Smithsonian Folkways, 2015). He is a highly respected authority and internationally sought-after teacher in the vocal repertoires of central and eastern Ukraine.

**Tina Peresunko** is a research fellow at the Hrushevsky Institute of Ukrainian Archaeography and Historiography at the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. She is a 2021 Fulbright Scholar (New York) and the author of an original study on the history of the song *Shchedryk* (Carol of the Bells). Tina initiated the commemoration of the centenary of Ukraine's cultural diplomacy and the European premiere of *Shchedryk* in 2019 by developing the project The World Triumph of *Shchedryk* – 100 years of Cultural Diplomacy of Ukraine. Based on its results, she published a collection of archival documents of the same name and prepared a traveling exhibition that was presented at the Ukrainian Parliament and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. She is the author of the book Cultural Diplomacy of Symon Petliura: *Shchedryk* against the "Russian world" : The Mission of Oleksandr Koshyts Choir (1919-1924), which won the Ukrainian national award "A Book of the Year 2019". She also initiated the celebration of the centennial of the US premiere of *Shchedryk* in 2022 and founded the Leontovych Institute NGO (2021).

**Tetyana Filevska** is a creative director of the Ukrainian Institute, Ukraine's cultural diplomacy organisation. Art-manager, curator and writer. Her background is in philosophy with experience in contemporary art and Ukrainian art history of the 20th century. Author of the books "KAZIMIR MALEVICH. Kyiv Period 1928-1930", "Kazimir Malevich. Kyiv Aspect" and "Dmitro Gorbachov. Sluchayi ". Worked in various art institutions in Ukraine. Tetyana is curating a public programme of the Ukrainian Pavilion at the 59th Venice Biennale dedicated to decolonisation.

Free and open to the public.

<https://harriman.columbia.edu/event/the-enduring-resonance-of-carol-of-the-bells-ukrainian-origins-and-musical-contexts/>

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