We need your help…

Each fall, for 40 years since the incorporation of the Shevchenko Guild, the Shevchenko Musical Ensemble has received invaluable community support which has guaranteed the Ensemble’s continuance and growth.

This moral and financial community support, from members, friends and readers of the Bulletin, exceeds all other sources of revenue including grants, fundraising events or concert ticket sales. Why? Because individual donations, from people of many different ethnic backgrounds, tell us that the work of the Guild and Ensemble is appreciated. It tells us that our programs are successful in reflecting not only the Ukrainian heritage, but also the heritage of many others, bringing a richness to their lives. The donations tell us that a wide spectrum of people want to be part of this one-of-a-kind cultural experience.

Through this support the Guild has maintained the Ensemble well, helping to achieve remarkable levels of performance by this unique arts group.

How is this done?

First of all, it’s done by providing the Ensemble with outstanding professional artistic leadership. The Shevchenko Choir and Toronto Mandolin Orchestra are fortunate to have, for almost 20 years now, a highly qualified and talented director in Alexander Veprinsky.

The Guild also provides professional performers and soloists to augment the Ensemble, and guest groups to share the Ensemble’s stage.

The Guild maintains an administrative office and building, which in turn provides a venue for meetings and events of Club 626 Seniors.

The Guild sponsors the Shevchenko School of Music, which has been successful in bringing young people to the performing group.

This is precisely what the Shevchenko Guild and Ensemble are here for – to consistently develop artistically as part of our mandate to maintain a culture and present it to the broadest Canadian audience possible.

Without support from the community, from people like you, the Ensemble would not be able to continue to grow and prosper.

Please give generously to this year’s Sustaining Fund Drive!

In this issue …

• Mandolins come to Toronto Harbourfront

• Shevchenko Choir sings in Music Niagara Festival

• Toronto Mandolin Orchestra returns to Glenn Gould Studio

Guest soloist Inga Filippova-Williams in Natalka’s Song from M. Lysenko’s opera Natalka Poltavka at Annual Concert of the Shevchenko Musical Ensemble.
Club 626 Seniors News

Club 626 Seniors, now in its 26th year, continues to hold very interesting monthly meetings on the first Wednesday of each month (excluding the summer months of July and August).

Opening this season was guest speaker Wayne Gilbert who gave a very interesting talk on photography, complete with photographic examples of what not to do, and how to do. There were plenty of questions, particularly relating to digital cameras and photo storage.

At every meeting the business portion (which is very short) and the guest speaker are followed by a substantial lunch. Depending on the month, the lunch will be on a Thanksgiving theme (turkey), or Easter (eggs and kobasa), or just a regular lunch of delicious sausages and sauerkraut.

Guest speakers often cover matters of health such as safe and beneficial pharmaceuticals, home and food safety and much more.

All meetings are held at 626 Bathurst Street.

Each season the Club also holds special events in other locations. To round out their season, they hold a Bar-B-Q in the beautiful backyard of Stan and Evelyn Nazarec. This event has become known as the “Garlic Fest”. Held in August, soon after Stan has harvested his fantastic garlic, the highlight of the event is the raffling off of braids, bouquets and bags of wonderful organically grown garlic.

Other events are the Christmas Party held in early December and the Spring Luncheon held in June. And in between these they get in at least one trip to either the Shaw or Stratford Shakespeare Festival.

Everyone is welcome to join the Club.
Call Membership Secretary Lydia Kit at 416-534-5272.
Orchestra concert to feature outstanding artists

Following a highly successful concert at Toronto’s Harbourfront in July, the Toronto Mandolin Orchestra, under the Artistic Direction of Alexander Veprinsky, is now gearing up for another concert in Glenn Gould Studio in November.

**Featured soloists**

Along with a new program of folk, world and popular classical music, the concert will feature a solo presentation, and performances with the orchestra, by Alexander Sevastian, an internationally-acclaimed bayanist, currently based in Toronto.

Born in Minsk, Belarus, Sevastian began playing the accordion at the age of seven. After finishing musical school in 1991, he attended the Glinka Musical College in Minsk, followed by the Gnessin Academy of Music in Moscow. In 1998 Sevastian studied with Professor Elisabeth Moser at the Sofia Goubaidulina Master Class in Avignon, France.

From 1996 until 2001 he was a member of the Russian TV and Radio Orchestra, recording TV performances and radio tapes.

In May 2002 Sevastian completed his post-graduate course in Moscow. After moving to Toronto in 2001, he also completed an Advanced Certificate in Performance program from the University of Toronto.

In 2007 he was the winner of the Coupe Mondiale World Accordion Championships in Washington, D.C.

Alexander has performed across Canada, as well as in Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Germany, Serbia, Italy, Portugal, Japan, Mexico, and the USA. He has appeared as soloist with such prestigious orchestras as the Toronto Symphony and the Calgary Philharmonic.

Sevastian currently plays and tours with Toronto Woodwinds and Quartetto Gelato, two internationally-renowned ensembles.

On November 11, with the Toronto Mandolin Orchestra, Alexander will perform Gypsy Rhapsody by Russian composer, Viktor Gridin, himself an accomplished bayanist; and Allegro from the Concerto for Bayan by Chaikin.

Add to this another mesmerizing appearance by domra virtuoso, Ira Erokhina, and you have one fabulous afternoon of music by outstanding talents.

Ira is not new to our readers, nor to our audiences. She has been a member and soloist with the Toronto Mandolin Orchestra since 2002. She received her education at the Russian State Academy of Music in Moscow and was senior lecturer at that academy. She was a soloist with the Osipov Folk Orchestra in Moscow for many years, is also an award winning performer, and has been recorded in Russia and abroad.

**Toronto Mandolin Orchestra**
**Sun. Nov. 11, 2012 • 2 PM**
**Glenn Gould Studio**
$35 • 416-533-2725 ✦

See back page for more details
Mandolins come to Toronto’s Harbourfront

Toronto’s Harbourfront Centre, which offers a myriad of activities for all ages, introduced a program this summer called Classical IV: Strings. It was a showcase of different stringed instruments from around the world, the mandolin being one of those featured.

The Toronto Mandolin Orchestra was a great choice for this series with its program of light classical music played in the classical mandolin style.

There was an excellent turn out for two rehearsals the week prior to the concert which was held on Sunday, July 29. Soon conductor Alexander Veprinsky and the musicians of the orchestra were ready with a fast paced and colourful program.

They opened with Ukrainian Fantasy, a reflection of the Ukrainian roots of the orchestra, and followed with Scherzo from Five Pictorial Sketches for Orchestra by Canadian composer Ben McPeek.

Domra soloist Ira Erokhina held the audience in absolute awe with her performance of Introduction and Waltz from the film Dr. Zhivago. And to show the versatility of this instrument (never mind the ability of the soloist), Ira ended with Flight of the Bumblebee to resounding applause from the hundreds in the audience.

The remainder of the program included Part IV of the Peer Gynt Suite, the Overture to Countess Maritza, Strauss’ Tritsch-tratsch Polka, the Waltz from Shostakovitch’s Jazz Suite, a lively tango, a Russian Gypsy selection, and ended with the rousing Russian folk song Pedlars. This got the very receptive audience clapping along with the orchestra’s fast paced finale.

Although the day was very hot, this proved to be one of the finest performances for the orchestra. Nothing can compare to performing for a new audience which is totally enraptured by music they’ve not heard before.

As the show was set to begin, people enjoying their day at Toronto’s beautiful Harbourfront, gravitated towards the large outdoor West Jet stage, and soon numbered somewhere between 700-800.

The outdoor stage, with a picturesque view of sailboats on Lake Ontario, and the other facilities of the theatre were very comfortable for the musicians, making it a pleasurable event. Above all, the highly professional technicians and staff guaranteed the rehearsal and performance ran without a hitch, producing some of the best sound ever experienced by the orchestra.

There was also time between the rehearsal and performance to meander around the grounds of Harbourfront and partake of various dishes of international food.

Great performances like this are not possible without the full participation and cooperation of the musicians. And here, our “hats off” to concertmaster Mary Kuzyk, who at the tender age of 93, endured the extreme heat, not only to perform successfully, but to tune instruments for others.

In addition to mandolin music, the Classical IV: Strings series presented songs and music from as far away as Gao, Mali performed by Sidi Touré whose songs and music are a tribute to the Singhai folk traditions of Mali.

The program also featured the often maligned (albeit lovingly) ukelele. This little instrument, which originated in
Portugal and made popular in Hawaii, is related to a number of South American folk instruments.

This brings me to another group that was part of the series featuring the mandolin. Tio Chorinho performed on the Friday night prior to TMO’s concert on Sunday.

Founded by Eric Stein (mando-bass player with the TMO), Tio Chorinho is a new Toronto ensemble dedicated to performing Brazilian choro (pronounced SHOH-roh) music in the tradition of the great mandolin master Jacob do Bandolim.

Since formed in 2009, the group has developed an impressive repertoire of familiar choro classics by such composers as Pixinguinha, Ernesto Nazareth, Waldyr Azavedo, and of course Jacob do Bandolim.

Choro is primarily an instrumental musical form which originated in Rio de Janeiro in the mid-19th century. A complex popular musical form based on improvisation, it is best described in American terms as “the New Orleans jazz of Brazil.”

The word choro in Portuguese literally means “to cry,” but the term actually refers to the lilting or “weeping” qualities of the solo instrument, usually mandolin, flute, or clarinet.

The traditions that nurtured the choro in Rio in the late 1800s are pretty much the same ones that brought about the danzón in Cuba, the beguine in Martinique, and ragtime in the United States.

In Brazil, choro combines the beautiful singing lines of the Portuguese melody with the life-giving heartbeat of Africa, yet retains a distinctly Brazilian personality. It is extremely virtuosic music that is played to sound very natural and spontaneous.

Eric Stein shone as lead mandolinist in the group, accompanied by Joel Schwartz on mandolin, Avital Zemer on 7-string guitar and the amazing Maninho Costa on pandeiro, or tambourine.

Brazilian music by Tio Chorinho was also featured in the Harbourfront series. Eric Stein is on the left.

“Dido, that was great!”
TMO’s youngest fan and Alexander’s first grandchild, Samuel.

The large, enthusiastic crowd at the performance by the Toronto Mandolin Orchestra at Harbourfront.
Annual concert marks Guild’s 40th anniversary

The Shevchenko Musical Ensemble, by opening its Annual Concert with the passionate song "Ukrayina" (Ukraine) by contemporary composer T. Petrynenko, set the stage for a wonderful program of rich Ukrainian traditions and other songs and music.

The concert, held on May 27 in the Isabel Bader Theatre of the University of Toronto, was a showcase of some of the season’s finest work by the Shevchenko Choir and Toronto Mandolin Orchestra.

Joining the Ensemble on the program as guest group was the Desna Ukrainian Dance Co. The dancers, in their usual spirited and near perfect form, performed "Hut-sulka", the fiery Gypsy Dance and the traditional Hopak, all choreographed and staged by directors Yuri and Luba Grekov.

Rudy Wasylenky, Board member representing Ontario, and conductor of the Welland Mandolin Orchestra, did a fine job as MC.

Under the baton of Alexander Veprinsky, Artistic Director, the first half of the concert showcased the choir accompanied by the orchestra in "Tsymboryky" (Carpathian Nightingales) by A. Kos-Anatolsky. Guest soloist in this selection was soprano Inga Filippova-Williams.

With her astounding and beautiful operatic voice, Inga was also loudly applauded for her rendition of "Natalka’s Song" from the opera "Natalka Poltavka".

The choir was right on in their a capella folk song, "Palala Sosna", arranged by A. Kushnirenko.

Again accompanied by orchestra, the choir performed "Molotba" (Threshing) by G. Sviridov, a tribute to the work of peasants resulting in a rich harvest.

Bass Herman Rombouts, who has been a chorister and soloist with the Ensemble for many years, conveyed heartfelt love for all mothers in "Chornobryvtsi" (Mother’s Marigolds) by contemporary Ukrainian composer V. Vermenykh.

Domra virtuoso Ira Erokhina moved the audience (as she never fails to do) with her outstanding performance of a new selection "Along Muromskaya Road" arranged...
Guild’s 40th anniversary

by Alexander Tsygankov, former concertmaster of the Osipov Folk Orchestra in Russia.

Hassan Anami, an outstanding tenor who perfected his craft in Azerbaijan, wowed the audience with the popular Granada by A. Lara.

In the second half of the program the audience was treated to more classical fare, as well as Canadian traditional songs.

The orchestra opened this half with two movements from the Peer Gynt Suite No 1 by E. Grieg. The choir and orchestra then moved effortlessly to two Canadian songs - Peg Leg’s Fiddle by Morris Surdin and the French Canadian La Laine des Mouton (Sheeps’ Wool).

Patria Oppressa from the opera Macbeth by G Verdi demonstrated the choir’s versatility and its ability to tackle such challenging pieces. Another “classic” by choir which the audience loved was The Man I Love by the Gershwin brothers featuring the lovely solo voice of Helen Spiers.

Tanya Podolskaya’s performance of Under Paris Skies by H. Giraud was well received as was Helen Spiers rendition of Climb Ev’ry Mountain by Rogers & Hammerstein.

The beautiful Song of a Japanese Autumn by Y. Kuwahara performed by the orchestra brought loud applause from the audience.

As is always the case, the Ensemble returns to its Ukrainian roots in the finale of the concert. This year it featured soprano Inga Filippova-Williams, and tenor Hassan Anami as soloists with choir and orchestra in the Finale based on excerpts from the opera Cossack Beyond the Danube by S. Hulak-Artemovsky.

Preceded by Hopak performed by the Desna Ukrainian Dance Co. it was a rousing climax to an afternoon of great music and superb performances by all the singers, musicians and dancers.

Historic milestone

Excerpts from the printed Souvenir Program

This year marks 40 years since a new vision for the future of the Shevchenko Musical Ensemble was born, a bold vision which reflected the reality of the times… more and more people from all walks of life and different ethnic backgrounds were joining the Ensemble and new audiences were giving their approval of the goals of the Ensemble.

The leadership knew that the future of the Ensemble lie in its ability to become relevant to as broad a cross-section of Canadian society as possible… they saw the Ensemble as a vehicle not only for reflecting the Ukrainian heritage, but a truly Canadian culture.

The National Shevchenko Musical Ensemble Guild of Canada, incorporated in 1972, was the first musical guild established for an amateur arts group and the first guild for a Ukrainian Canadian group.
Our sincere thanks…

Last season the Board of Directors made a special appeal for funds specifically allocated for the purchase of a new computer and a photocopier.

This appeal was made to a number of people who have been exemplary supporters of the work of the Shevchenko Ensemble, people we believed we could count on.

And we were right.

We are happy to announce that we received enough funds for a new computer, but unfortunately, not sufficient for the purchase of the photocopier which we need to reproduce the music for the choir and orchestra of the Ensemble.

The funds were also earmarked for the upgrade and improvement of our website. In today’s world, one’s website is their first introduction, their first impression, to an interested party. It is important that our site be visually dynamic and that it be constantly updated to reflect the current activities and concerts of the Ensemble.

We are fortunate, and happy to announce, that the donations received will cover the cost of a professional upgrade to our website.

A huge, heartfelt “Thank you” to all those who responded to our appeal with such generosity. It is greatly appreciated by the Board of Directors and all members of the Shevchenko Musical Ensemble.

– Board of Directors

Honouring Florenz Seychuk

Over the past 40 years, since the incorporation of the Guild, there have been hundreds of volunteers serving on the Board of Directors, Executive Committee and many sub committees. These volunteers are the Guild’s precious gems, the treasures which give the organization true value and keep it healthy and active.

One of these volunteers is Florenz Seychuk who will be honoured this year at the Guild’s Annual Banquet on October 14.

Florenz has a long past in the Ukrainian community. She was a member of the Toronto Mandolin Orchestra for many years and travelled with the Ensemble both on its cross Canada tour in 1964 and the Ukraine tour in 1970.

Because of shift work, Florenz experienced a hiatus from the orchestra and organizational work for a period time, but soon after retirement, she returned to “active service”.

She served on the Board of Directors for many years and in 2006 was elected President of the Board. During her 5 years as President until 2011, Florenz delved deeply into the many activities of the Guild. She displayed good leadership by always staying on top of a situation, and by reaching out and encouraging others to get involved in the work.

Florenz herself participated on many committees, including the Bingo committee, 1000 Club lottery, raffles and other fundraisers such as concert ticket sales, and especially the annual banquet for which she did the lion’s share of work.

After stepping down as President of the Board, since 2012 Florenz accepted the responsibility of President of Club 626 Seniors.

At the banquet on Sunday, October 14, Florenz’s dedication and contribution to the Shevchenko Musical Ensemble and Guild will be recognized and applauded.

There will also be, as always, a delicious Ukrainian meal and great entertainment by the Ukrainian band known as “Prut”.

Everyone is welcome to come out for a lovely fall dinner in honour of Florenz, a volunteer who has done a yeoman job at keeping the wheels turning.

Annual Banquet

Honouring Florenz Seychuk

Sunday, October 14
1:00 PM

King’s Garden Banquet Hall
15 Canmotor Ave
(south of The Queensway between Royal York & Islington)$55.00 person
Call 416-533-2725
Shevchenko Choir performs at Music Niagara Festival

On the scorching afternoon of July 22, 2012, the Shevchenko Choir was invited to perform in Simcoe Park as part of Music Niagara, Niagara-on-the-Lake’s annual music festival.

Conducted by Alexander Veprinsky and accompanied by pianist Elena Zviagina, the hour-long concert consisted of an international selection of music, including Ukrayina (Ukraine), Va Koozneets (Russian folk song “In the Smithy”), the Sephardic folk song Adio Querida, and Bob Dylan’s Blowing in the Wind.

Soloists with the choir included Herman Rombouts, who sang the popular Russian folk song Styenka Razin; Helen Spiers, who sang Gershwin’s The Man I Love; and Hassan Anami who closed the program with the Ukrainian folk song Rozpryahayte (Unharness the Horses, Lads).

Despite the heat, the choir performed with dedication and enthusiasm, feelings that the audience reciprocated with fervent applause.

Also commendable was the concert’s sound, which was clear and audible throughout the performance. The sound technician was knowledgeable and cooperative.

In an interview following the concert, conductor Alexander commented, “In my opinion, concerts like these are very useful for the choir, not only because we need practice performing, but also because this is the best form of advertisement for us. People who listened to us at the performance may become our future audience.”

Now in its fourteenth season, Music Niagara is a month-long summer festival featuring musicians from across Canada and abroad who perform classical, jazz, vocal, country, and choral music. The beautiful settings of Niagara-on-the-Lake attract both a local audience and tourists.

This was the choir’s first performance at Music Niagara. Impressed with the choir’s calibre, organizers of the festival promised to invite the choir in future years.

The close of the concert left everyone exhausted but pleased.

A day in the life of a singer

Impressions of the Niagara concert by Helen Spiers

In any case this is how the day went - we arrived at 11:30 and some of us arrived at 10:30 (the traffic was great!).

Everyone who committed to coming did come and we waited two and a half hours in back of the band shell for the convenors to show up before Alexander could do a sound check.

Finally two men came (very nice to deal with by the way) to set up the mikes and sound equipment. There was some background noise with the mikes, of course.

We started our rehearsal at 1:00 pm, finished at 1:30 pm, dressed in a two stall washroom or in back of our cars, got on the stage at 2 pm and sang 13 songs dripping wet from our sweat because the temperature was 40 F in the shade.

We sure felt sorry for Alexander because he was in the sun the entire performance. I think we did a very good job singing considering the terrible heat we had.

If it weren’t so uncomfortable we may have had a larger audience because there were plenty of people up the street.

However, it sure beat singing in the rain!
Serbian Choir to join Shevchenko in concert

For the annual Choral Concert, to be held on Sunday, February 3 this season, the Shevchenko Choir has invited the Kir Stefan the Serb Choir as their guests.

Named after the first known medieval Serbian composer Kir Stefan the Serb, the choir was established in 2000 under the jurisdiction of St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Church and was inaugurated in 2011 as the official choir of the Serbian Orthodox Diocese of Canada. Its mission is to be the ambassador of Serbian culture in Toronto and Canada.

In addition to its liturgical repertoire, the choir also performs Serbian folk and contemporary songs.

In its relatively short history the choir has performed in the GTA, in Ottawa, Kitchener, Niagara Falls, Whitby, Hamilton, Chicago, Boston, Portland and New York.

It has also had the fortune to perform in London, England, Stockholm and Belgrade.

The choir has initiated or performed in such events as North York Culture Days, the World Music fundraising concert for which they presented popular music from Cuba, Spain, Italy, Greece and Serbia.

The choir is under the Artistic Direction of Jasmina Vucurovic who holds two Master of Music degrees – one in piano performance from the University of Arts in Belgrade, the other in conducting from the University of Toronto.

Jasmina has performed as pianist or as conductor in Canada and the US, in England, Sweden, Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia.

As a vocal coach, Ms. Vucurovic was a member of the Canadian Opera Company Ensemble Studio. She also worked for 10 years as an opera coach and rehearsal pianist for Opera Atelier. An active chamber musician, Jasmina has performed with some of Canada’s most distinguished singers and instrumentalists.

The Shevchenko Choir of the Shevchenko Musical Ensemble, under the direction of Alexander Vepirnsky, will present a new program of Ukrainian folk and contemporary songs, as well as other folk songs and classical choruses.

This concert is always a very fine choral treat which helps to warm the hearts on a cold winter day.

More detailed information of this event will follow in the New Year.
Please give us your support

The Shevchenko Musical Ensemble has well earned its reputation as one of the finest exponents of Ukrainian choral and orchestral music. It has also shown to be one of the most innovative amateur musical organizations in this country.

The Ensemble’s high quality of performance in its presentation of Ukrainian and other cultures, is thanks to the generous moral and financial support, for over 40 years, from Canadians of many different ethnic backgrounds.

The life blood of the Shevchenko Ensemble is the support it gets from this broad community. Without it the Ensemble could not achieve this high level of performance, nor continue to perpetuate and popularize the cultural traditions of the Ukrainian people and of many others in the multicultural mosaic of Canada.

The Guild’s Annual Sustaining Fund Drive, in support of the Ensemble, is now underway and we need your help.

If you are a regular donor, you have our heartfelt thanks. Please continue your support to help us develop new and creative artistic programs.

If you have not joined us as yet, please do so today and become a part of this one-of-a-kind cultural experience.

All donations are tax deductible (Reg. No. 11905 1910 RR0001).

Thank you sincerely from all the singers and musicians of the Shevchenko Musical Ensemble.

The BULLETIN
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Photography by Wayne Gilbert of GPS Digital Photo Images unless otherwise noted
Alexander Sebastian and his instrument will take the audience on an extraordinary musical adventure of classical music of impeccable arrangements for the bayan and performed by an artist completely dedicated to his art; classical and folk music delivered with a good dose of humour. His engaging rapport with the audience and the chemistry between Alexander and his audience creates a memorable experience not to be missed.

Ira Erohina resident domra soloist with the Toronto Mandolin Orchestra will keep the audience in awe as her fingers move with lightning speed up and down her instrument.

The Toronto Mandolin Orchestra performing the intricate arrangements by Alexander Veprinsky is said to be “...the premier mandolin orchestra in North America.”

TORONTO MANDOLIN ORCHESTRA
Alexander Veprinsky, Artistic Director/Conductor

Guest artist
Alexander Sebastian
World class bayanist, currently a member of Canada’s popular Quartetto Gelato

“Johann Sebastian would himself have marvelled at the colours Sevastian’s fleet fingers pulled from his instrument. Astonishing!”
- Oliver Daily News, Oliver, Canada

domra virtuoso
Ira Erokhina
Former soloist with the world renowned Osipov Folk Orchestra of Russia

On the program:
Gypsy Rhapsody by V. Gridin for Bayan & Orchestra
Concerto for Bayan by N. Chaikin
Russian Two-Step by A. Tsygankov for Domra & Orchestra
In A Persian Market by A. Ketelbey
Caucasian Sketches Sardar’s Processional by M. Ippolitov-Ivanov
and much more...

Sunday Nov. 11, 2012 • 2:00 PM
Glenn Gould Studio • CBC • 250 Front St. W
$35 • Call 416-533-2725 • info-sme@bellnet.ca
VISA orders add $2 per ticket