

m o

## Ukrainian Folk Songs and Dances at the International Music Eisteddfod on Wednesday, the 4th July 1951

---

A wealth of Ukrainian folk song is among the richest and most beautiful of the folk songs of Europe. Ukrainian folk dances are colourful and expressive of every phase of life of an agricultural people with a long and eventful history.

Many songs and dances have their roots in ancient pagan ceremonies and reflect primitive customs connected with birth, marriage and death in the life of the individual, and with the changing seasons of the year.

Christianity came to the Ukraine from Byzantium, and Kiev and other principalities became the first centres of an Eastern Christian culture and its defenders against the hordes of Tartars and Mongols sweeping from the steppes of Asia across the Eastern European plain, and later against the Ottoman Empire of the Turks.

Many Ukrainian songs tell of the deeds of those heroic ages and are inspired by the burning faith of the devoted champions of Christianity.

Later songs tell the epic story of the deeds of Ukrainian Cossacks and present scenes from the hard and adventurous life of the Cossack Communities. Other songs are of the everyday life of a people that has never lost its close touch with the soil and with nature.

Finally, there are many love songs of great tenderness and lyrical beauty.

The folk dances correspond to the songs in all the above characteristics. Some are emblematic of the main events of human life, others of seed-time and harvest, of the long night of winter and of the re-awakening of life in spring.

The Ukrainian "HOMIN" Male Choir and the Manchester Dancing Group are giving some of these folk songs and dances at the Llangollen International Music Eisteddfod on Wednesday the 4th July, 1951.

Both the Choir and Dancing Group consist of Ukrainian Textile Workers at Manchester, who find the time for regular practice and for preparation for this, the greatest event in their year, after a hard day's work.

The Choirmaster is Professor Yarema HORDIJ, who graduated in music at the University of LVIV in the Western Ukraine. The leader of the Dancing Group, which took part in last year's International Eisteddfod, is Mr. Peter DNISTROVYK.

In Wednesday's competitions the Choir first sings "Echos of the Village Street," a mixture of song on various subjects arranged by Hnatyshyn, and then "A Star rose over Pochajiw," the traditional story of the defence of the Monastery of that name and its delivery from the assault of the Turkish Army by the intervention of Our Lady of Pochajiw, a song of deep religious feeling.

At the Evening Concert on the same day they give another religious song, "Do Not Weep, Rachel," and then "The Birds' Choir," both arranged by D. Kotko.

In the competition the Folk Dancing Group will dance the "Hopak" national dance and a Dance of the Zaporozhian Cossacks.

At the Evening Concert they will do a Ukrainian Highlanders' dance of the East Carpathian Mountains.

All the members of the Choir and Dancing Group wear Ukrainian national dress which has been made and richly embroidered with traditional patterns by the ladies of the party. Embroidery of all kinds is the favourite occupation of the women and girls of the Ukraine on winter evenings.

The participation of both the "HOMIN" Choir and of the Dancing Team in the International Music Eisteddfod has been arranged by the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain, of 49 Linden Gardens, London, W.2, who had also arranged for the Dancing Group to participate in last year's International Eisteddfod.