The renowned folk dance ensemble named after Pavlo Virsky is famous for its bright colors, the unity of content and form and the vivid embodiment of its stage concept. This magnificent artistic group has embraced the beauty of its native Ukraine, the wisdom of its people as well as the folk tradition of humor and optimism.

Each and every performance is a romantic, elevated, passionate and exciting show. The ensemble’s diverse concert programs presenting the exquisite charm of Ukrainian folk dancing and the wealth of its traditions have been warmly received by audiences all over the world. The history of the ensemble goes back to 1937 when Pavlo Virsky and Mykola Bolotov, well-known Ukrainian ballet-masters, brought together a group of folk dancers.

From 1955 to 1975, Pavlo Virsky headed the ensemble, and his outstanding talent was magnificently implemented in the performances of the company. It was under his guidance that the ensemble matured into a highly professional dance company whose art has won the hearts of countless reviewers and the general public around the world.

Proceeding from the folk traditions, Pavlo Virsky created such artistic choreographic compositions as *We’re from Ukraine, The Sailors, The Dolls, We Remember, The Funny Zaporizhia Cossack Dance Povzunets*. Full of soft humor are *The Stepp Wagoner’s Delight and Under the Cherry Tree* whilst *A Girl from Podillya* is soft and romantic, and *The Weeping Willow* is even sad.

Myroslav Vantukh, Pavlo Virsky’s disciple and great expert in folk traditions and ethnography has been in charge of the ensemble since 1980. His main objective and continuing creative quest is the careful preservation and development of folk choreographic art. First class performance and expressiveness of the dancers, exquisite moves and the bright palette of costumes, the wealth of tunes and completeness of the choreographic plot are among characteristic features of the new numbers such as *The Carpathians, The Tambourine Dance, The Young Years, In Peace and Harmony*, and *The Russian Suite*, which have entered the ensemble’s repertoire.

In 1962 Pavlo Virsky created a children’s two-year choreographic studio. In 1992 was turned by Myroslav Vantukh into a choreographic school for children, and later it became a source of talented young performers for the ensemble.

The ensemble has toured many different lands quite far from its native Ukraine. Among the viewers who have welcomed the leading company have been people of Austria, England, Argentina, Bulgaria, Brazil, Belgium, Venezuela, Greece, Ecuador, Italy, India, Spain, Canada, Columbia, China, Cuba, Korea, Mexico, Mongolia, Germany, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, the United States of America, Hungary, France, France, Czech Republic, Chile and Switzerland.
The foreign press has been unanimous about the high artistic and professional qualities of the company.

It may seem that the peak of accomplishment and professionalism has been reached, but the Virsky Ukrainian National Dance Company under the direction of Myroslav Vantukh is creating new dances, full of surprises and delight, and is thus letting people of the world learn more about the wonderful land of Ukraine.
MYROSLAV VANTUKH
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Myroslav Vantukh became artistic director of the Virsky Ukrainian National Dance Company in 1980. A disciple of Pavlo Virsky, he considers himself a choreographic ethnographer and is a recognized expert on Ukrainian folk culture. His primary aim is the careful preservation and development of folk dancing as choreographic art. In this spirit, he has created The Carpathians, Tambourine Dance, The Young Years, In Peace and Harmony and the Russian Suite, all of which are part of the company’s repertory. In 1962, Pavlo Virsky founded a two year choreographic training course, which Myroslav Vantukh was able to consolidate as a choreographic school for children in 1992: The Ballet School of the Ukrainian National Dance Company.

PAVLO VIRSKY

Pavlo Virsky’s first efforts at founding a folk dance company came in 1937 and were rewarded in 1940, when his group was recognized as Ukraine’s Song and Dance Company and which today carries his name: Virsky – The Ukrainian National Dance Company. Virsky was trained as a ballet dancer and performed as a soloist with a number of theaters in the old Soviet Union, where he also staged classical ballets such as Marius Petipa’s Swan Lake, Don Quixote and Raymonda. Like his colleague Mikola Bolotov, however, he was fascinated by folk dancing, which he believed to portray a people’s culture and soul. During World War Two his company performed for the soldiers at the front, and the group was accorded further recognition in connection with the Decade of Ukrainian Art and Literature in Moscow in 1951. As a choreographer Virsky created a number of the dances, including Povzunetz, Khmil, Under The Cherry Tree, Zaparozhtsy, The Needle Women, Sailors’ Dance and Hopak, and was awarded a number or honors prior to his death in 1975.

UKRAINE

As an independent state Ukraine first appeared on the world map in 1991, but its history dates back to the 9th Century A.D., when one of the largest and most powerful states of medieval Europe was founded under the name of Kyivska Rus.

Ukraine is situated in Eastern Europe. With an area of 603,700 km, it is the second largest country on the continent. With 51 million inhabitants, it is sixth in population. 73% are Ukrainians and 22% are ethnic Russians.

The country borders on Russia, Belarus, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and the Black Sea. It is characterized as an agricultural nation with flat, fertile plains. 15% is covered by forest and towards the West one finds the Carpathian Mountains.
VIRSKY
UKRAINIAN NATIONAL DANCE COMPANY
COMPANY OF 85

Myroslav Vantukh, *Artistic Director*

Season 2009-2010

Producer: Andrew S. Grossman
Associate: W. Seton Ijams