

100 Years of Ukraine's Cultural Diplomacy: The European Mission of the Ukrainian Republican Capella (1919–1921)

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Abstract

The article deals with the reputational, cultural, and informational resonance of the Ukrainian Republican Capella's tours conducted by Oleksandr Koshyts in Western Europe from 1919 to 1921. The Ukrainian Republican Capella was created on the initiative of Symon Petliura, Head of the Directorate, Chief Otaman of the Army and Navy of the Ukrainian National Republic (UNR), to promote international recognition of Ukraine's independence and the image of Ukrainian culture in the world. It gave 208 concerts in 74 of the most prestigious concert halls of 45 European cities. More than 600 reviews complimentary of Ukraine, Ukrainian state institutions, and Ukrainian culture appeared on the pages of the leading Western European press, and Ukrainian diplomatic missions abroad as well as the Capella's office received hundreds of letters from leading European artists and politicians with enthusiastic reviews on its musical art and UNR aspirations for independence. The author provides little-known archival documents of the Ukrainian Republican Capella Foundation at the Central State Archives of the Supreme Bodies of the Government of Ukraine (CSASB of Ukraine), covering institutional, legal, financial and diplomatic support of the Capella abroad as part of Symon Petliura's and the UNR Directory's policy of cultural diplomacy, and suggests that foreign tours of the Capella should be considered as the first project of cultural diplomacy in the history of modern Ukraine.

Key Words: Ukrainian cultural diplomacy, Ukrainian National Republic, Ukrainian Republican Capella, Oleksandr Koshyts, Symon Petliura, Shchedryk.



Introduction

The idea of Ukraine as a nation ... was that its people should have direct access to the centers of civilization rather than being condemned to an inferior status, that they should be communicating with the world at large on their own rather than through intermediaries

ROMAN SZPORLIUK¹

¹ Roman Szporluk, "Ukraine: From an Imperial Periphery to a Sovereign State," *Daedalus* 126.3 (1997): 113.

The term “cultural diplomacy” in Ukrainian historiography is rather new. In the classical definition of this notion by the American political scientist Milton Cummings,² which is most often used by Ukrainian and foreign authors, it is said that the concept of “cultural diplomacy” is associated with “the exchange of ideas, information, art, and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding.”³ The scholar also presents a second, alternative variant of the definition: “But ‘cultural diplomacy’ can also be more of a one-way street than a two-way exchange, as when one nation concentrates its efforts on promoting the national language, explaining its policies and point of view, or ‘telling its story’ to the rest of the world.”⁴ In any version, this definition refers to nations with a communications apparatus for a dialogue with the world—the state, institutions, and civil society. But what about stateless nations whose cultural identity and communications institutions are banned? What is the model for the cultural diplomacy of stateless nations?

The Cultural Diplomacy of Stateless Nations: Truth in Exile

At the time when Ukraine was part of the Russian Empire, the Ukrainian language, literature, and the activities of cultural and educational institutions were subject to systematic harassment. While the Alliance Française, the first cultural diplomacy institution in Europe, was founded in Paris on July 21, 1883 to spread the French language all over the world, in Ukraine the distribution and use of the Ukrainian language was prohibited by the Russian authorities by the Valuev Circular (1863) and the Ems Decree (1876). As the French government was taking measures to enhance the image of French literature abroad, Russian authorities were repressing Ukrainian writers and forbidding the printing of books in Ukrainian. As a result, the Ukrainian language and culture had no institutional chance for a dialogue with the world—it had no chance even in Ukraine.

In response to imperial oppression, Kyiv intellectuals secretly sent a leading Ukrainian writer and public figure, Mykhailo Drahomanov, to publish Ukrainian books where it was not forbidden—abroad. In 1876, he founded a Ukrainian printing house in Geneva, which operated until 1919 as the first proto-institution of Ukrainian cultural diplomacy. For 43 years, the Ukrainian emigration center produced hundreds of books on Ukrainian subjects in Ukrainian (including works by Taras Shevchenko, Panas Myrnyi, Panteleimon Kulish) as well as in French.⁵ Regarding Drahomanov’s

2 Milton Curtis Cummings Jr. (1933–2007) is an American political scientist and professor of political science at Johns Hopkins University, a public figure in the field of state-funded arts, a leading expert on comparative cultural policy, and the author and editor of a number of scholarly books.

3 Milton C. Cummings, *Cultural Diplomacy and the United States Government: A Survey* (Washington, D. C.: Center for Arts and Culture, 2003), 1

4 Cummings, *Cultural Diplomacy and the United States Government*, 1.

5 Yevhen Bachynskyi, “Ukrainska Drukarnia v Zhenevi (75-a richnytsa zasnuvannia Ukrainiskoi Drukarni v Zhenevi, 1876–1919–1952) [The Ukrainian Printing House in Geneva (75th

European cultural mission, Dr. Boris Mints states: “For the sake of truth, he went into exile.”⁶ In such an illogical way, Ukrainian culture went abroad to fight for its survival, to tell the truth in exile.

Until the proclamation of independence by the UNR (January 22, 1918), the Ukrainian voice in the world resonated underground, illegally, rather a means of preserving Ukrainian authenticity and culture. Only with the creation of Ukrainian state institutions was Ukrainian culture given protection and assistance, and beginning with the organization of representative missions of Ukraine in the world, a field for Ukrainian cultural diplomacy in its classical sense emerged.

The UNR's Cultural Diplomacy: Political and Institutional Aspects

In his aforementioned work, Milton Cummings, author of *Cultural Diplomacy and the United States Government*, gives an overview of the history of US cultural diplomacy government programs and institutions functioning from 1933 to 2003. Analyzing the effectiveness of the American cultural diplomacy model from a historical point of view, Cummings does not only suggest a definition of the concept but also emphasizes an important practical idea of the American experience: “Programs in cultural diplomacy are often strongest if they have a firm institutional base, grounded in legislation, and when they have strong support at the top of the federal government.”⁷ Although the American scholar grounds his postulate on the historical tradition of the US, the pioneering project of the UNR's cultural diplomacy was implemented according to the same formula. Moreover, the formation of the Ukrainian model of cultural diplomacy similar to the mentioned US model occurred even earlier than in the United States—in 1919.⁸

It was then that the Directorate of the UNR and Symon Petliura, Director of the Directorate and Chief Otaman of the the UNR's Army and Navy personally initiated a large-scale promotion of Ukrainian culture in Europe as an instrument for the

Anniversary of the Ukrainian Printing House in Geneva, 1876–1919–1952)],” *Naukovi zbirnyk 2* (1953): 58–105.

6 Mykhailo Drahomanov, *Ukrainska literatura, proskrybovana rosiiskym uriadom* [Ukrainian Literature Proscribed by the Russian Government], ed. Bohdan Yakymovych et al. (Lviv: Lvivskiy natsionalnyi universytet im. Ivana Franka, Naukova biblioteka, 2001), 92.

7 Cummings, *Cultural Diplomacy and the United States Government*, 14.

8 An American researcher began US cultural diplomacy in the creation of the Department of Cultural Relations in the US State Department in 1938, due to the threats of the geopolitical influence of Nazi Germany in Latin America. An annotated translation of the scholar's work is presented in the article: Tina Peresunko, “Zhorstka i miaka syla amerykanskoj kulturnoi dyplomatii: konspekt istorychnoho ohliadu stanovlennia i rozvytku instytutsii kulturnoi dyplomatii SSHA u 1933–2003 rokakh [The Hard and Soft Power of American Cultural Diplomacy: A Synopsis of the Historical Review of the US Cultural Diplomacy Institutions Formation and Development in 1933–2003],” *Ahora* 18 (2017): 54–60.

international recognition of Ukraine. On his personal commission and on the basis of a Law of the UNR dated January 24, 1919, the Ukrainian Republican Capella was created, which, with the status of “a high-profile state cultural institution,”⁹ embarked on promotional tours abroad—through means of musical diplomacy, to lobby “the Ukrainian question” in the world.

The project was supported by the highest government officials of the UNR, the already mentioned Head of the UNR’s Directorate and actual head of state Symon Petliura, Chairman of the Council of National Ministers of Ukraine Andrii Livytskyi, Chief Executive of Arts and National Culture of the UNR Pavlo Zaitsev, Ukrainian ambassadors, and heads of diplomatic missions of the UNR abroad Maksym Slavynskiy (Czechoslovakia), Mykola Vasylo (Switzerland), Volodymyr Poletyka (Austria), Mykhailo Tyshkevych (France), Andrii Yakovliv (Belgium, the Netherlands), Arnold Margolin (Great Britain), Mykola Porsh (Germany), Yulian Bachynskiy (the USA) and others¹⁰; administrative and financial assistance was provided by leading UNR authorities: the Directorate, the Ministry of Education and Arts (the Main Department of Arts and National Culture), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Finance. The symbol for the project was “Shchedryk,” arranged by Mykola Leontovych, the repertoire of the Ukrainian Republican Capella abroad and, at the same time, the soft power¹¹ of the UNR in its struggle for independence.

The article references archival materials of the Ukrainian UNR’s Ukrainian Republican Capella Archive, the Central State Archives of the Supreme Bodies of the Government of Ukraine (CSASB of Ukraine)¹² and suggests that the history of the world

9 See *Statut Ukrainiskoi Respublikanskoi Kapely* [*Charter of the Ukrainian Republican Capella*] [Manuscript] (Central State Archives of Supreme Bodies of the Government of Ukraine, f. 3965, desc. 2, no. 5, p. 13).

10 See Tina Peresunko, *Kulturna diplomatiia Symona Petliury: “Shchedryk” proty “russkoho mira.” Misiia kapely Oleksandra Koshytsia (1919–1924)* [*The Cultural Diplomacy of Symon Petliura: “Shchedryk” vs. the “Russian World.” The Mission of Oleksandr Koshyts’ Capella, 1919–1924*] (Kyiv: Artek, 2019), 302.

11 “Soft Power” is a term in the field of international relations and national security introduced by the American scholar Joseph S. Nye, Jr., which describes the state’s ability to achieve desired results in international relations through persuasion and attractiveness, not violence and coercion. The content of the concept is described by the researcher in the books: *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1999); *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).

12 CSASB of Ukraine, fund 3965, description 1, 2. The fund consists of 145 files, storing tens of thousands of documents: official documents of the UNR on the organization and coordination of the choir as a Ukrainian state institution abroad (legislative, administrative and financial issues); hundreds of posters and programs of the Capella’s concerts abroad; reviews of the world press (about 1,300 reviews from 17 countries); hundreds of letters and comments from Western intellectuals to the Capella’s administration; photographs, memoirs of the Ukrainian Republican Capella’s members, etc. The representative documentary base of the

tours of the choir conducted by Oleksandr Koshyts should be considered from the perspective of the state and institutional policy of the UNR in the field of cultural diplomacy and as an example of the first state project of cultural diplomacy in the history of modern Ukraine.

Symon Petliura “Makes the Ukrainian Question International Through Song”

“Symon Petliura found a great way to overcome Western European ignorance. This military man who cares for the liberation of his land from the yoke of tsarism and the Bolsheviks can do something better than just fight. He knows that a sword has no power, and to win the sympathy of the Western world for his country he introduces us to the art of his country. Ukraine is a country of black soil, the birthplace of Hoho, and is now becoming for us a country of song. He makes the Ukrainian question international through song,” —

ONS VADERLAND (Brussels), January 11, 1920¹³

As noted in the memoirs and research on the topic,¹⁴ Symon Petliura came up with the idea of initiating a music promotion project of Ukraine on January 1, 1919. On that day the UNR's Chief Otaman was present at the Young Theater together with then Chairman of the UNR's Directory Volodymyr Vynnychenko and Prime Minister Volodymyr Chekhivskyi for an anniversary event to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the literary career of Mykola Voronyi, a Ukrainian poet, actor and director. Known for his theater and literary reviews,¹⁵ Symon Petliura could not avoid such an important

fund has been published for the first time in Ukrainian historiography in the following works: Peresunko, *Svitoyi triumf “Shchedryka”*; Peresunko, *Kulturna diplomatiia Symona Petliury*.

13 Here and further reviews of the European press are cited by source: *Vyryzky z hazet z vidhukamy na kontserty Kapely v Avstrii, Chekhoslovachchyni, Frantsii ta inshykh krainakh* [News Clippings of Capella Concerts in Austria, Czechoslovakia, France, and Other Countries] (Central State Archives of Supreme Bodies of the Government of Ukraine (CSASB of Ukraine), f. 3965, desc. 2, no. 55).

14 Oleksandr Koshyts, *Z pisnieiu cherez svit* [With Song Across the World] (Kyiv: Knyha rodu, 2008), 7; Oleksander Pelenskyi, *Svitova kontsertova podorozh Ukrainskoi respublikanskoi kapeli. Spomyny uchasnyka* [The World Concert Tour of the Ukrainian Republican Capella: Memoirs of a Participant] (Lviv, 1933), 7; Levko Bezruchko, “Memuary pro Ukrainsku Respublikansku Kapelu [Memoirs About the Ukrainian Republican Capella],” [Manuscript] (Central State Archives of Supreme Bodies of the Government of Ukraine, f. 3965, desc. 1, no. 24, p. 12); Symon Narizhnyi, *Ukrainska pisnia za kordonom* [Ukrainian Song Abroad] (Prague, 1941), 4.

15 Since 1901, Symon Petliura worked as a reporter, journalist and editor of numerous publications in Ukraine and abroad: *Ukraina* (Ukraine), *Rada* (Council), *Slovo* (Word) (Kyiv); *Pratsia* (Labor), *Selianyn* (Peasant), *Volia* (Will), *Literaturno-naukovyi vistnyk* (Literary scientific herald) (Lviv);

cultural event, particularly as on the eve of December 29, 1918, the Directorate decided to establish the Ukrainian State Voronyi Prize for the best work in the arts. At the event, the First Kyiv National Choir conducted by Oleksandr Koshyts performed the premiere of Mykola Leontovych's "Legend." According to eyewitnesses, this composition inspired the leadership of the UNR to promote Ukrainian culture in Europe. In his memoirs, Oleksii Prykhodko, the head of the national choirs section of the music department at the Ministry of Education and Arts, wrote: "The composition impressed the government of the UNR to such an extent that they decided at that particular moment to establish the Capella and to send it to Western Europe to represent our music culture."¹⁶ Symon Petliura's instant decision was verified by choir conductor, Oleksandr Koshyts: "On January 1, 1919, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of Mykola Voronyi, Petliura said on greeting me, 'Oleksandr Antonovych! Bring Stetsenko and together come and see me tomorrow — there are important things...' At the meeting, Petliura, addressing me, said: 'You should organize a Capella within a week to be ready for a foreign tour, otherwise, — he added laughing, — I'll shoot you!'"¹⁷

The plan of the former editor and music critic and now the commander-in-chief of the UNR army to make Ukraine known in the world by means of the arts was a unique component of the general policy of promoting the Ukrainian idea abroad and seeking the political and military support of the West in the war of Russia against the UNR, as in January 1919 Russian Bolsheviks were on their approach to Kyiv.

With this objective in view, the Government of the UNR dispatched a number of official diplomatic missions.¹⁸ At the same time, the Peace Conference (its sessions lasting from January 18, 1919 to January 21, 1920) opened in Paris where the leaders of the victorious states in the First World War raised the question of borders in post-war Europe. The Ukrainian leadership hoped that their Proclamation of Ukrainian

Ukrainskaia zhyzn (Ukrainian Life) (Moscow); *Vilna Ukraina* (Free Ukraine) (St. Petersburg); *Trybuna Ukrainy* (Tribune of Ukraine) (Warsaw); *Tryzub* (Trident) (Paris) and others. His journalistic and editorial heritage includes hundreds of publications, among which are cultural reviews (on the works of Ivan Franko, Taras Shevchenko, Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi, Ivan Karpenko-Karyi, Volodymyr Vynnychenko, Borys Hrinchenko, Lesia Ukrainka, Maria Zankovetska among others).

16 Oleksii Prykhodko, "Kyrylo Hryhorovych Stetsenko," in *Muzychna kultura Ukrainy u spohadakh, materialakh, lystakh*, ed. Ivan Lysenko (Kyiv: Rada, 2008), 168.

17 Oleksandr Koshyts, "Ukrainska Respublikanska Kapela. Knyha otstu i zhovchi. Shchodennyk [The Ukrainian Republican Capella. A Book of Vinegar and Bile. Diary]" [Manuscript] (CSASB of Ukraine, f. 3965, desc. 2, no. 95, p. 1).

18 Five embassies (Germany, Austria, Bulgaria, Turkey, Finland), 17 extraordinary diplomatic missions (Great Britain, USA, Belgium, the Vatican, Greece, Denmark, Estonia, Italy, Poland, Romania, Hungary, France, Czechoslovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, the Caucasus) and 6 consular offices (Berlin, Munich, Gdansk, Riga, Batumi, and Baku) were formed. Iryna Matiash "Reprezentatsiia ukrainskoi idei za kordonom doby Dyrektorii [Representation of the Ukrainian Idea Abroad During the Directorate Period]," *Zovnishni spravy* 7–8 (2011): 19.

independence would be internationally recognized due to the collapse of the empires and on the grounds of US President Woodrow Wilson's statement concerning the right of a nation to self-determination.

The main obstacle for the recognition of the UNR in Europe was the loyalty of the Entente countries, especially France, to its ally—Russia—and to the principle of Russia's indivisibility, according to which Ukrainians were promoted as an integral part of the Russian nation. From French Foreign Minister Stephen Pichon's point of view, the Ukrainian national government was illegitimate because it had “no roots in the people, there being no reason to separate Ukraine from Russia.”¹⁹

The UNR leadership had to demonstrate to the European allies that the Ukrainian political project was inspired by the Ukrainian people's natural need to have their own state because of its cultural and national traditions being different from Russian ones. Only cultural diplomacy could address the issue in the best way possible. Conductor Oleksandr Koshyts wrote in his memoirs that “The objective of our work abroad was to show Europe the soul and musical creativity of our people as this trip had to promote the national and political revival of Ukraine.”²⁰ The musical program of the choir included Ukrainian carols, dumas, religious chants, folk songs, and the Ukrainian national anthem—everything that objectively differentiates the Ukrainian language and culture from the Russian and demonstrates the continuity of Ukrainian national tradition and therefore the grounds for granting Ukrainians the right for their own statehood.

“The Ukrainian Republican Capella is a State Institution”

Symon Petliura's instruction was assigned to the UNR's head of the music section of the Ministry of Education and Arts, composer and conductor, Kyrylo Stetsenko, and the head of the ethnographic section, composer and conductor Oleksandr Koshyts. The draft law on the Capella, dated January 5, 1919, provided for the “appropriation to the Ministry of Education and Arts funds in the amount of one million one hundred and eighty-four thousand five hundred karbovantsi” for the formation of the “Ukrainian State Capella” and “one million one hundred forty two thousand five hundred francs” for “the Capella's visit to the Peace Conference in Paris and to other locations in Western Europe.”²¹ The explanatory note to the draft law stated: the Capella “is to be sent abroad for 2 months ... to represent Ukrainian music culture there.”

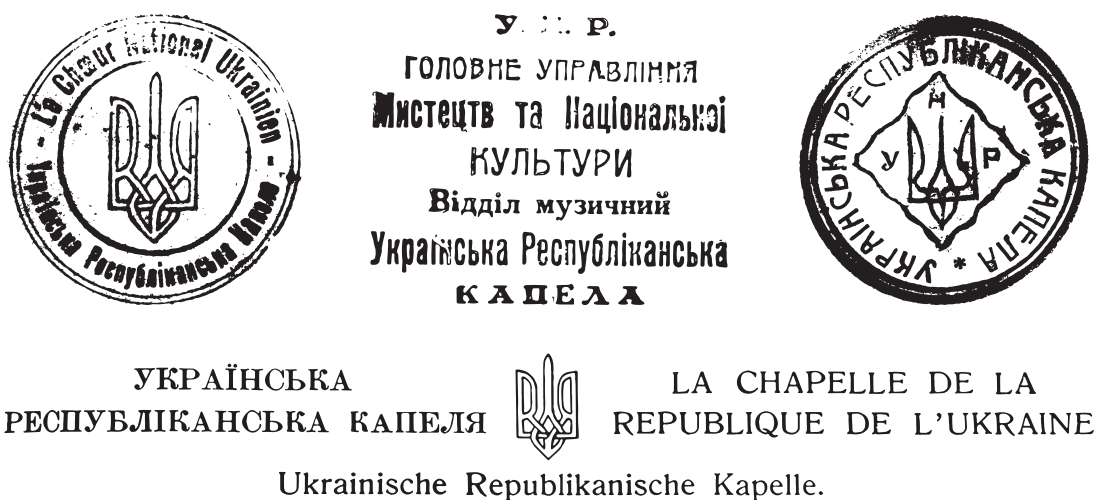
A Law of the UNR dated January 24, 1919 confirms the revised name of the choral project, “The Ukrainian Republican Capella” (replacing “State”). The “Republican” status of the choir was to broadcast abroad the political status of Ukraine (the UNR). The

19 Volodymyr Kosyk, “Frantsiia i pytannia samostiinosti Ukrainy. 1917–1919 [France and the Problem of Ukraine's Independence, 1917–1919],” *Zapysky naukovoho tovarystva im. Tarasa Shevchenka* 225 (1993): 287.

20 Koshyts, *Z pisneiu cherez svit*, 90.

21 See *Proekt zakonu pro Ukrainsku Derzhavnu Kapelu* [Draft Law on the Ukrainian State Capella] (January 5, 1919) [Manuscript] (CSASB of Ukraine, f. 3965, desc. 2, no. 1, p. 1).

Capella's archive stores documents with the official forms used in at least four European languages to indicate the name of the Ukrainian cultural project (French, German, English): "La Chapelle de la Republique de L'Ukraine," "Ukrainische Republikanische Kapelle," "Ukrainian National Choir." The Choir's correspondence in Ukraine and abroad also used the following form: "U. N. R. The Main Department of Arts and National Culture. Music Section. Ukrainian Republican Capella." The state seal of the Capella featuring a trident and the letters "UNR" was also to be considered an ambassador of the UNR's state and national symbols abroad (there were two variants of the Capella's seal—Ukrainian and Ukrainian/French).



According to a certificate of the UNR State Chancellery, the Capella is a state institution, and its singers are UNR civil servants: "The Ukrainian Republican Capella is a state institution under the Main Department of Arts and National Culture, and its employees are UNR public servants."²²

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was also involved in the realization of the UNR's cultural and diplomatic project. On March 23, 1919, a letter signed by Oleksandr Karpynskyi, Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of the UNR, was sent to Ukrainian diplomatic missions abroad with a message about the trip of The Capella: "The Main Department of Arts and National Culture of the Ministry of Education has sent the Ukrainian Republican Capella abroad to acquaint nations with Ukrainian song... Upon informing all Embassies and Diplomatic Missions of the UNR about the above-mentioned, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs asks that additional assistance be given to the Capella if need should arise."²³

22 *Posvidchennia Derzhavnoi Kantseliarii UNR* [Certificate of the UNR's State Chancellery] (September 29, 1920) [Manuscript] (CSASB of Ukraine, f. 3965, desc. 2, no. 22, p. 44).

23 *Lyst Ministerstva Zakordonnykh Sprav do Ukrainських misii za kordonom* [Letter From the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the UNR to Ukrainian Missions Abroad] (March 23, 1919) [Manuscript] (CSASB of Ukraine, f. 3965, desc. 2, no. 2, p. 1).



First group photo of the Ukrainian Republican Capella, Stanislaviv, April 14, 1919 (CSASB of Ukraine, f. 3965, desc. 1, no. 5, p. 34)

Europe: “The Cultural Maturity of Ukraine Should Legitimize Its Political Independence”

“The Ukrainian Ministry of Culture and Arts focused its activities in the young state on choral singing as a means of political propaganda. The world which was deliberately misinformed about Ukraine by a despotic Russia should be convinced of the authenticity of the Ukrainian people’s culture. The cultural maturity of Ukraine should legitimize its political independence,” —
MUSICA DIVINA (Vienna) (August 7, 1919)

The premiere performance of the Ukrainian choir abroad took place on May 11, 1919 at the National Theater (Národní divadlo) in Prague. Commenting in the June issue of the Prague magazine *Hudebni Revie*, one of the most acclaimed Czech conductors of the time, Jaroslav Křička wrote:

Ukrainians came and conquered! Unfortunately, for too long we hadn’t been aware of them and seriously offended them when involuntarily and without information we lumped them together against their will with the Russian people. Our desire for a “great and indivisible Russia” itself is a weak argument against nature,

against the will and feelings of the entire Ukrainian nation, for which independence, just as it is for us, is everything.²⁴

Musical sympathies turned into a political statement when Zdeněk Nejedlý, a



Poster of the Ukrainian Republican Capella's concert premier in Prague, which took place on May 11, 1919 at the National Theater (Národní divadlo) to raise funds for the Czechoslovakian Red Cross (CSASB of Ukraine, f. 3965, desc. 1, no. 5, p. 34)

leading Czech musicologist, Professor at Charles University, future Minister of Education and President of the National Academy of Sciences of Czechoslovakia authored the first foreign publication on the Capella,²⁵ writing “Who loves and feels the wonderful chants of the Ukrainian Republican Capella, cannot but love Ukraine with one’s entire soul.”²⁶

Czechoslovak concerts of the Ukrainian Republican Capella (a three-month tour from May 1 to July 18, 1919 with visits to Prague, Plzeň, Brno, Prostějov, Olomouc, Chrudim, Turnov, Mladá Boleslav, Jičín) confirmed the correctness of Symon Petliura’s aspirations. In a letter to the head of the Ukrainian delegation in Paris, Mykhailo Tyshkevych, he wrote,

Take care of the Ukrainian Republican Capella’s arrival in Paris to demonstrate the riches of Ukrainian music and song. The Capella created a furor in Czechoslovakia, and turned many Moscowphiles into Ukrainiophiles. I am sure that Europe has nothing like it. The

24 Peresunko, *Kulturna diplomatiia Symona Petliury*, 74.

25 Zdeněk Nejedlý, *Ukrajinská republikánská kapela* (Praha: Čas, 1920).

26 Koshyts, *Z pisneiu cherez svit*, 56.

Capella's stay in Paris may have a calming effect and help overcome existing prejudice.²⁷

Having arrived in Paris (previously touring Austria and Switzerland due to a delay in obtaining French visas), the Ukrainian Republican Capella gave a concert premier on November 6, 1919 at Gaveau Hall. Unfortunately, at that time the “Ukrainian question” at the Paris Conference had been decided in favor of other states: European leaders approved the occupation of Transcarpathian Ukraine by Czechoslovakia, Northern Bukovina by Romania, and Eastern Galicia by Poland. However, even under those circumstances, the Capella continued to fulfill its ambassadorial mission. Charles Seignobos, a prominent French historian and professor at the Sorbonne, writing in the *France et Ukraine* newspaper, commented:

For me, the choir made an incredible impression that I haven't experienced since listening to Wagner's music in Munich. No propaganda could be more effective for learning about the Ukrainian nation. No matter how much they deny the existence of your nation, your chorists have shown that this nation has a musical soul of unsurpassed strength.²⁸

Therese Junq-Clemenceau, daughter of Georges Clemenceau, French Prime Minister and chairperson of the Paris Peace Conference (the opponent of UNR recognition), was a passionate supporter of the Parisian concerts. To convince French politicians, including her father, to support Ukraine, Clemenceau attempted to organize Capella concerts in state theaters. The Capella archive stores her handwritten letter confirming her sympathy and assistance in the search for venues.²⁹

“The Ukrainians are Wise in the Choice of Their Form of Propaganda”

After France, the Ukrainian Republican Capella performed in Belgium, the Netherlands, Great Britain, Germany, Poland, and Spain.³⁰ Artistic success and reputational gains

27 Liliana Hentosh, “Lysty Symona Petliury do hrafa Mykhaila Tyshkevycha [Symon Petliura's Letters to Count Mykhailo Tyshkevych],” *Ukraina moderna* 1 (1996): 161.

28 Peresunko, *Kulturna dyplomatiia Symona Petliury*, 130.

29 *Lyst T. Klemanso do administratsii kapely [Letter From T. Clemenceau to the Capella Administration]* (CSASB of Ukraine, f. 3965, desc. 2, no. 60, p. 32).

30 The route of the European tour of the Capella was as follows (author's processing on the basis of archival sources of the Capella): the Czech Republic (more than 30 concerts: May 1–July 18, 1919, August 8–October 15, 1920): Prague, Plzeň, Brno, Prostějov, Olomouc, Chrudim, Turnov, Mladá Boleslav, Jičín, Nova-Pak, Gorice, Německé Jablonné; Austria (11 concerts: July 20–October 8, 1919): Vienna, Baden, Innsbruck; Switzerland (10 concerts: October 10–

N33.

SALLE GAVEAU
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PARIS

Jeudi 6 Novembre
Mercredi 12 et Samedi 15 Novembre 1919
à 8 heures 3/4 du soir

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par le
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de la
République
Ukrainienne
80 Chanteurs et Chanteuses de l'Ukraine
TROIS PROGRAMMES DIFFÉRENTS
Hymnes - Cantiques - Noël - Chants populaires

PRIX DES PLACES

Parterre (fauteuil de face) fr. 40	1 ^{er} Balcon (1 ^{re} série) fr. 8
— (pourtour) 6 50	— (pourtour) 6 50
— (loge de face) 44	2 ^{es} Balcon (fauteuil de face) 6
— (loge de côté) 9	— (fauteuil de côté) 5
1 ^{er} Balcon (1 ^{re} série) 40	— (pourtour) 3

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312 - WATELAT, Paris - 2.500 - 264-19

Programme

HŶMNE FRANŶAIS — HŶMNE UKRAINIEN

I
Cantiques

1. Sainte Barbe Arrangé par KOSCHITZ
2. Notre-Dame de Potchaïv » » LEONTOVYTCH
3. L'Ange Gardien » » KOSCHITZ

II
Chants de Noël

4. De grand matin Arrangé par STOUNNITZKY
5. On bâtit l'église à Koutzivka » » STETZENKO
6. Dans une cour » » STETZENKO
7. Derrière la montagne » » LEONTOVYTCH
8. Chchedryk » » LEONTOVYTCH
9. Sur la montagne » » STETZENKO

III
Chansons populaires

10. Derrière la forêt Arrangé par KOSCHITZ
11. La Forêt murmure » » LYSSENKO
12. Oh ! malheur (Oï bida) » » KOSCHITZ
13. Je file ma quenouille » » LEONTOVYTCH
14. Les souliers » » LYSSENKO
15. a) Le jeune moine » » KOSCHITZ
b) Les champignons » » LYSSENKO

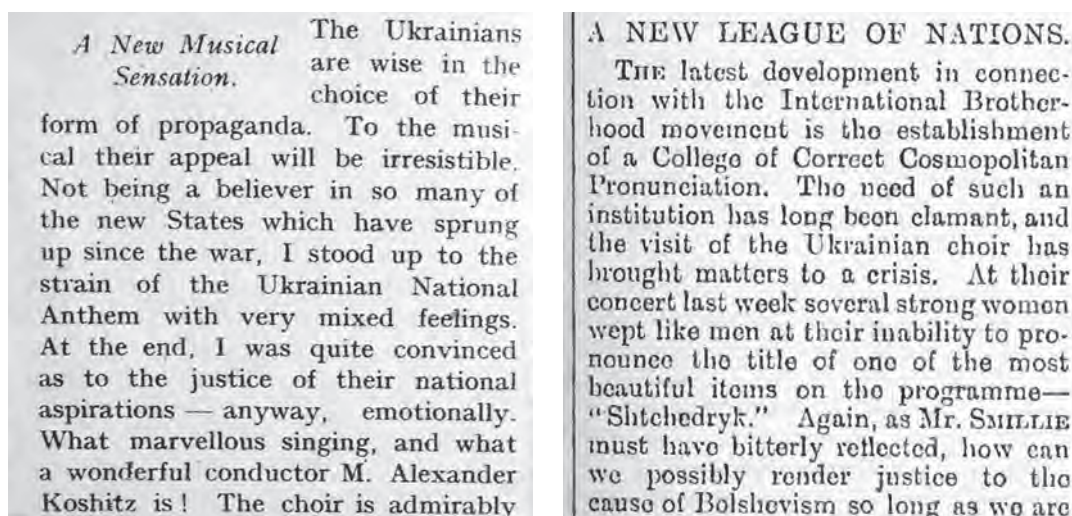
Poster and repertoire of the Ukrainian Republican Capella's concert premier in Paris, November 1919
(CSASB of Ukraine, f. 3965, desc. 2, no. 48, p. 129 back)

for the UNR accompanied it everywhere. The Ukrainian musical manifestation placed Ukrainian culture on the European artistic map. At the same time, it acted both for the political awareness of Ukraine as a state and its national aspirations: "I was completely indifferent to Ukraine, but now I am keen to advocate the art of this country everywhere!" (*La Gazette de Hollande* (The Hague), January 24, 1920); "The Ukrainian choir has arrived in Berlin. The purpose of its world tour is to make moral gains for the young national republic. It won us over immediately" (*Berliner Zeitung Mittag* (Berlin), May 4, 1920).

November 1, 1919): Basel, Geneva, Bern, Lausanne, Zurich; France (about 60 concerts: November 4–December 31, 1919, January, February, March 1921): Paris, Bordeaux, Toulouse, Marseille, Nice, Lyon; Belgium (22 concerts: January, March 1920, February, March 1921): Liege, Brussels, Antwerp, Ghent; the Netherlands (5 concerts: January 18–31, 1920): Rotterdam, The Hague, Amsterdam; Great Britain (12 concerts: February 1–March 1, 1920): London; Germany (over 30 concerts: April 1–July 25, 1920, June 1921, April 1922): Berlin, Cologne, Salzwedel, Cologne, Duisburg; Poland (about 20 concerts: September 1920–January 1921): Warsaw, Lublin, Łódź; Spain (12 concerts: January 28–February 8, 1921): Barcelona, Bilbao, Oviedo.

The Ukrainians are wise in the choice of their form of propaganda. To music lovers their appeal will be irresistible. Not being a believer in so many of the new States which have sprung up since the war, I stood up to the sound of the Ukrainian National Anthem with very mixed feelings. At the end, I was quite convinced as to the justice of their national aspirations—in any case, emotionally (*The Sketch* (London), February 11, 1920).

European critics often placed the Capella at the top of European performance projects: “We may acclaim the choir as one of the best that have visited London” (*The Pall Mall Gazette* (London), February 4, 1920); “We see a great musical success that is rarely seen even in such a musical city as Vienna” (*Wiener Morgenzeitung* (Vienna), July 27, 1919); “If Ukrainian people create such works of art, then we are faced with a Phenomenon” (*Der Bund* (Bern), October 17, 1919); “This is living proof of unbelievable art... The Ukrainian choir needs to be heard to understand the perfection vocal art can attain” (*Bonsoir* (Paris), January 17, 1921). Passion for Ukrainian music is turning into passion for Ukraine: “Ukrainian art is new and powerful. Who has felt it, cannot but love Ukraine” (*Journal de Liege* (Liege), January 3, 1920).

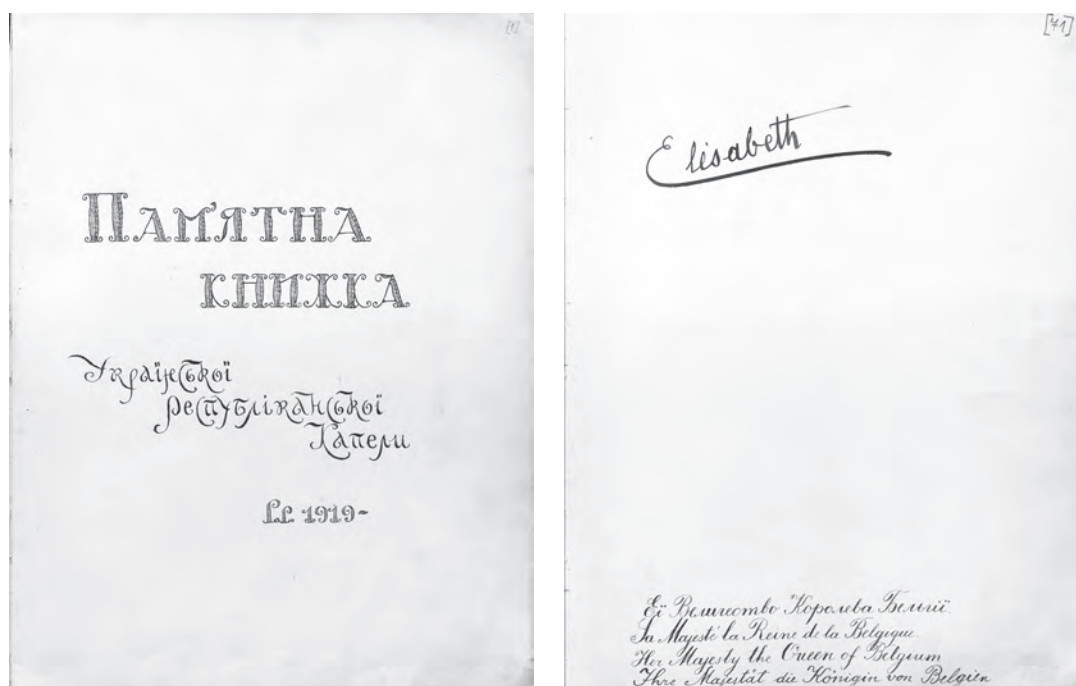


Fragments of newspaper publications on Capella concerts in the London press:
The Sketch, *The Punch* (February 11, 1920) (CSASB of Ukraine, f. 3965, desc. 2, no. 55)
(CSASB of Ukraine, f. 3965, desc. 2, no. 48, p. 129 back)

In each country of the European tour Ukrainian diplomatic missions took care of the Capella as UNR representatives, the Capella being met at the highest state level in Prague, Vienna, Berne, Paris, Brussels, The Hague, London, and Berlin. Ambassadors arranged diplomatic receptions in honor of the choir with the participation of foreign intellectuals and the press, helped chorists obtain visas, established contacts with the press, and networked with VIPs.

“The Ukrainians Gave us not Only Beauty but Also a Lecture on National Consciousness”

In each tour country the Capella's administration contacted and invited to concerts representatives of a wide target audience, very often free tickets were sent to top artists and politicians. The Ukrainian concerts were attended by high-ranking officials (ministers, ambassadors, generals) and heads of state: the Queen of Belgium (La Reine Elisabeth de Belgique), Belgian Prime Minister Leon Delacroix, German President Friedrich Ebert, Deputy Prime Minister of Poland Ignacy Daszyński, among others; leading cultural figures like prominent Catalan composer and conductor Lluís Millet, Hungarian modernist conductor Nikisch Artur, pianist and reformer of German musical education Leo Kestenberg, British Symphony Orchestra conductor Raymond Rôze, Director of the Institute of Musicology of Belgium Antonio Tirabassi, American and French dancer Isadora Duncan, director of the Vienna Music Academy Ferdinand Löwe, theatre director and producer Max Reinhardt and many others. Most of these figures left their signatures in the *Golden Book* of the Capella or sent letters to the Capella's administration: “I have rarely heard such coherence and perfection of a choir in sound, intonation, rhythm, and dynamics”³¹ (Ferdinand Löwe, director of the Vienna Music Academy); “All my sympathies are on the side of your people, I know how hard it is for you to gain your freedom”³² (Queen Elizabeth of Belgium).

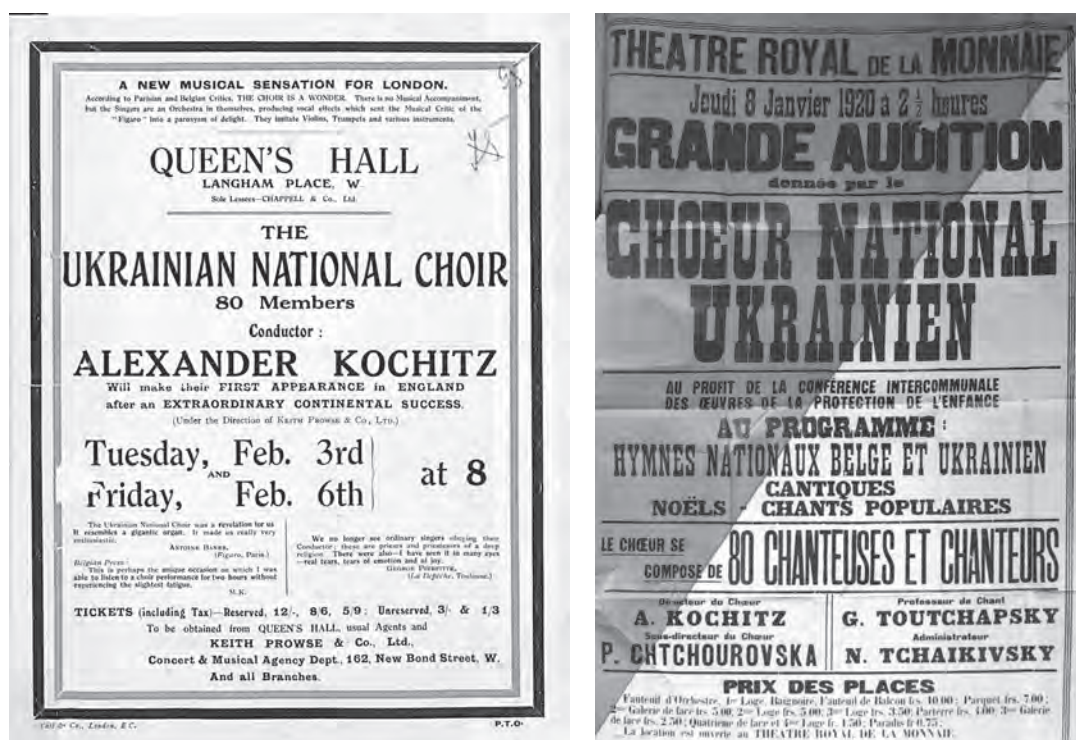


Memorial Book (Golden Book) of the Ukrainian Republican Capella (1919–1923) with the signature of Queen Elizabeth of Belgium.

T-A 002558, National Library of the Czech Republic—Slavic Library, Prague

31 Peresunko, *Kulturna diplomatiia Symona Petliury*, 93.

32 Koshyts, *Z pisneiu cherez svit*, 153.



Posters of Ukrainian concerts in London and Brussels, 1920

(CSASB of Ukraine, f. 1429, desc. 2, no. 37, p. 95; CSASB of Ukraine, f. 3965, desc. 2, no. 49, p. 376)

A considerable number of the concerts were charitable. Ukrainians performed to benefit various European institutions: the International Red Cross, the Belgian and French Children's Society, the Blind Veterans of the British War Society, the German Workers' organizations, and many others. A large number of letters of appreciation from these institutions are stored in the Capella archive: "Let me thank you for the graceful transfer of the funds collected from your first concert for the needs of youth social welfare in Austria" (from the Ministry of Social Affairs of Austria); "Please send Mr. Koshyts and all Ukrainians heartfelt gratitude for the generous gesture of supporting French children through song" (Ligue fraternelle des enfants de France); "We are grateful for the help of the Ukrainian National Choir" (The War Seal Foundation of Great Britain).³³

In addition to social service and raising the prestige of Ukrainian culture, the concerts of the Ukrainian Republican Capella confirmed the prestige of UNR cultural policy. On Capella posters and in its programs, the Ukrainian musical project was positioned as a personal initiative of both Symon Petliura, Head of the Directorate, and a curatorial project of the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Arts.

This is why the European press published positive reviews of the work of government institutions of the UNR in the field of culture: "Sent by the Ministry of Arts, which, unfortunately, we still do not have, they promote their national masterly performances of fraternal Ukrainian culture" (*Reforma* (Prague), May 18, 1919);

33 Peresunko, *The Cultural Diplomacy of Symon Petliura*, 93, 135, 187.



UKRAINISCHE REPUBLICANISCHE KAPELLE

im Auftrage des Ukrainischen Ministeriums für Kunst und nationale Kultur mit der
Absolvierung einer Konzerttournee in Europa und Amerika betraut.

*Poster of the Ukrainian Republican Capella's performances in Vienna
mentioning the curatorial institution of the tours—the Ukrainian Ministry of
Culture and Arts (CSASB of Ukraine, f. 3965, desc. 2, no. 48, p. 66)*

“The Ukrainian Ministry of Culture and Arts has focused its activities in the young state on choral singing as a means of political propaganda” (*Musica Divina* (Vienna), August 7, 1919); “The Ministry of Education of the young state of Ukraine has decided that the best means of recognizing the Ukrainian nation is the representation in Europe of the most characteristic features of the national art of their country” (*Le Peuple* (Brussels), January 11, 1920); “In the Ukrainian Republic, government assistance to its own national art exists at such a high level that it serves as a model for other states” (*De Volksgazet* (Brussels), January 14, 1920). Western critics’ similar assessments of the UNR’s public institutional work not only refute the views of some foreign historians about the marginal nature of Ukrainian politics and diplomacy of that time but also position the model of the cultural diplomacy of the UNR Directory as a pioneering political project in Europe.³⁴

This is confirmed by the following reviews of European critics: “We could also send a German choir as the Ukrainian Government did” (*Vossische Zeitung* (Berlin), May 29, 1920); “Ukrainians gave us not only beauty but also a lecture on national consciousness” (*De Volksgazet* (Brussels), January 19, 1920); “An interesting and instructive experience... The young Ukrainian Republic, which does not even have

34 Polish researcher Andrzej Zięba positions the practice of Ukrainian diplomacy in the category of “political margins” (“ludy marginesu politycznego”), which is characterized by a lack of historical, intellectual, and institutional subjectivity in the international arena. See Andrzej Zięba, *Lobbing dla Ukrainy w Europie międzywojennej. Ukraińskie Biuro Prasowe w Londynie oraz jego konkurenci polityczni (do 1932 roku)* (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2010), 43.

well-established organization yet, was able to organize a perfect choir and dispatch it on a lengthy propaganda journey. What about us?" (*Gazeta Warszawska* (Warsaw), October 25, 1920).

Unfortunately, after the Bolsheviks Russia occupied Ukraine there was a disastrous lack of financial and political resources for large-scale cultural projects. The last state aid quota was given to the chorists in January 1921 in Warsaw, where the UNR government was in exile. The Capella gave a series of concerts in Poland and went on a second round of European tours (France, Belgium, Spain, Germany). On March 21, 1922, Symon Petliura, still hoping for European support, wrote to Oleksandr Koshyts: "Dear Maestro. I'm glad you've been fortunate to re-organize the Capella... When you are interviewed, say in a subtle way that 'Ukrainian music is "independent," "our own," "different," that "authentic" song is a part of independent Ukraine."

In September 1922, the choir accepted an invitation of American impresario Max Rabinov to the United States. From 1922 to 1924 it performed more than 400 concerts in seven countries of North and South America (the USA, Canada, Mexico, Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, Cuba). In this way, Mykola Leontovych's "Shchedryk" went overseas,³⁵ and ten years after, owing to an American conductor of Ukrainian origin, Peter Wilkhovsky, became the American *Carol of the Bells*.

"Shchedryk's" World Premier

"A magically sung masterpiece of folk art— "Shchedryk" in the arrangement of Leontovych— was greeted with a standing ovation by the audience, enthusiastically calling for an encore," —

LE XX SIECLE (Brussels), January 10, 1920

The fact of the triumphant presentation of the most famous musical brand of Ukraine in the world— "Shchedryk" by Mykola Leontovych— remained unknown in Ukrainian historiography. The Capella's premiere performance in Prague (May 11, 1919) also became the European premiere of the Ukrainian carol. The repertoire of the Ukrainian choir consisted of the folk song heritage of Ukraine in the arrangement of contemporary Ukrainian composers: Mykola Lysenko, Kyrylo Stetsenko, Mykola Leontovych, Oleksandr Koshyts and others. Leontovych's works, "Shchedryk" first of all, received most favorable reviews from the foreign public in each country of the Capella's world tours. This is noted both in the reviews of the foreign press³⁶ and in

35 *Shchedryk's* premiere in the United States took place on October 5, 1922 in New York at Carnegie Hall.

36 "The 'twittering *Shchedryk*' reminds us of our carols and has won the greatest success among the public" (*Reforma* (Prague), May 18, 1919); "There were explosions of genuine joy, especially in *Shchedryk*" (*New York Herald* (New York), November 9, 1919); "A magnificent masterpiece of folk art— *Shchedryk* in Leontovych's arrangement was greeted with standing ovations by the audience calling enthusiastically for an encore" (*Le XX Siecle* (Brussels), January 10, 1920);

<p>II. SHTCHEDRYK. (Arranged by Leontovych.)</p> <p>Shtchedryk is sung under the windows on New Year's Eve, mostly by choirs composed entirely of children. The soloist is generally a little boy; he begins in a shrill voice, as if to give the right pitch, after which the Choir joins in.</p> <p>Shtchedryk, Shtchedryk, Shtchedrivotchka, A little swallow Sat on the roof of a house; She began to chirp, And she called for the master. "Come forth, my Lord, come forth! Look into the stable, The ewes have given birth to lambs, Thy kine is very beautiful. Thou wilt get much money, But money is nothing. Thou possessest a pretty wife, With dusky eyebrows. Shtchedryk, Shtchedryk, Shtchedrivotchka, A little swallow has arrived!</p>	<p>Hun liederen zijn christelijke Kerstfeesten of zangen, die ons teragvoeren naar de Heidensch-Slavische feesten van Zonnewende. De laatste vierde men toen de dagen begonnen te lengen en men bij onze Germaansche voorouders de jaardag vierde.</p> <p>« Shtchedryk » wordt door de kinderen op Oudejaarsavond gezongen voor de vensters der huizen.</p> <p>Shtchedryk, Shtchedryk Shtchedrivotchka Een kleine zwaluwtje kwam zitten op het dak van 't huis. Het begon te swatelen roepend den heer van 't huis : Kom buiten, meester, buiten; Kijk in den stal. De schapen wierpen lammeren. Het vee staat fraai Veel geld zult ge hebben Doch het geld is niets Gij hebt eene mooie vrouw met zwarte brauwen Shtchedryk, shtchedryk, Shtchedrivotchka Een kleine zwaluwtje gekomen. (Voor de oudereen 2de kolom)</p>
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"Shchedryk's" lyrics translated into English and Flemish (CSASB of Ukraine, f. 3965, desc. 2, no. 55)

the memoir legacy of the choir itself³⁷ and of conductor Koshyts: "Shchedryk' was the crowning achievement of our repertoire in all parts of the country for five and a half years."³⁸ Thus, owing to the state tour of the Ukrainian Republican Capella led by Oleksandr Koshyts and to Symon Petliura's cultural diplomacy, the famous "Shchedryk" went abroad for the first time and gained world fame.

In addition, unlike contemporary "Shchedryk" recognition in the world, whose Ukrainian identity is often overshadowed by its American version (*Carol of the Bells*), a century ago it was convincingly Ukrainian, similar to its author Mykola Leontovych, who was also well-known all over the world. In the foreign press, we find transliterations of the authentic Ukrainian "Shchedryk" in different languages: *Šchedryk*

"Shchedryk—a real masterpiece—was so impeccably sung that it had to be repeated" (*De Telegraaf* (The Hague), January 28, 1920); "One of the most beautiful songs of the program—Shchedryk" (*The Punch* (London), February 11, 1920); "The colorfulness of Shchedryk by Leontovych was achieved through the gradations of sound" (*The Utica Daily Press* (Utica), October 25, 1922); "Shchedryk is interesting for its new rhythm" (*El Universal* (Mexico City), December 22, 1922).

37 From the travel notes of the Journal of the Ukrainian Republican Capella on concerts in the Netherlands: "The public gave us a very warm welcome, we sang *Shchedryk* for an encore" (Rotterdam, Doelen Zaal, January 19, 1920); "We sang *Shchedryk* and *Openky* for an encore" (The Hague, Koninklijke Schouwburg, January 22, 1920); "At the concert there were reviewers from all Amsterdam magazines. We sang *Shchedryk* for an encore" (Amsterdam, Hollandsche Schouwburg, January 24, 1920); "We sang well, with mood. We sang Leontovych's *Shchedryk* for an encore" (The Hague, Dierenfjuu, January 25, 1920). See CSASB of Ukraine, f. 3965, desc. 1, no. 2, p. 84–86.

38 Koshyts, *Z pisnieiu cherez svit*, 89.

(Czech); *Chchedryk arrange par Leontovytsch* (French); *Szczedrik* (Polish); *Stsjédrik, Chtheadrik* (Dutch); *Shtchedryk* (Mexican press); *Stehedryk* (Brazilian press); *Sctchelryk Leontovich, Stchedryk, Leontovicch* (Argentine Press), etc. In European newspapers and concert programs of the Capella we find translations of the text of the Ukrainian carol into English, French, Flemish, and other languages. The entire historical heritage of “Shchedryk” is only now becoming an object of scholarly investigation and is becoming accessible to the general public.³⁹

100 Years of Ukraine's Cultural Diplomacy

The European tour of the Ukrainian Republican Capella under the state patronage of the UNR Directorate lasted for two years (May 1919—May 1921) and took place in 10 countries of Western Europe: Czechoslovakia, Austria, Switzerland, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Great Britain, Germany, Poland, and Spain (in some countries the choir performed on a number of occasions). During this time the Ukrainian choir gave 208 concerts at 74 prestigious concert halls of 45 European cities. There were over 600 favorable reviews on Ukraine, Ukrainian state institutions, and Ukrainian culture on the pages of the leading Western press. The Ukrainian diplomatic missions abroad, the Capella's administration and Oleksandr Koshyts personally received several hundred letters from leading European artists and politicians with enthusiastic feedback on the music and the UNR's aspirations for independence. In general, during the world concert tours of the Ukrainian Republican Capella in 17 countries from 1919 to 1924, more than a thousand articles were published on pages of the foreign press. The UNR's Capella as a Ukrainian representative institution established hundreds of institutional partnerships and personal contacts with world institutions and artists.

Although Ukraine's political objectives in Europe and in the world were not achieved and the UNR was not recognized by the international community and did not receive support in its war for independence, the foreign mission of the Ukrainian Republican Capella became one of the most successful Ukrainian projects on the international arena. Writing about the Capella's musical mission to Yevhen Chykalenko, a renowned Ukrainian activist, philanthropist, and publisher, doctor Martiryi Galyn commented: “The Capella alone not only has positive cultural significance of great importance but great political significance as well.” Concert tours of the Capella demonstrated not only the high artistic skills of the Ukrainian people and the national

39 At the end of 2018, I initiated a scholarly and educational project entitled “Source Studies in the History of Cultural Diplomacy of Ukraine: Shchedryk's World Triumph – 100 Years of Ukraine's Cultural Diplomacy.” The project was supported by the Ukrainian Center for Cultural Studies at the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine and by the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation. According to the results of the project, a collection of archival documents was compiled and published (Peresunko, *Svitovyi Triumf “Shchedryka”*); a web site (<http://shchedrykdiplomacy.org.ua>) was launched; a traveling exhibition was created and presented at the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, The Cabinet of Ministers, and other state, cultural, and educational institutions of Kyiv.

originality of Ukrainian culture distinct from Russian culture but also the effective work of the UNR's state institutions in the field of culture and diplomacy.

The coordination of Capella activities by UNR government agencies, particularly the culture and foreign policy ministries, should be considered as the launch of an inter-agency cooperation model among public authorities in Ukraine in the implementation of foreign cultural policy. Today, the world tours of the Ukrainian Republican Capella as a UNR representative government institution led by Oleksandr Koshyts and under the patronage of Symon Petliura should be considered the first cultural diplomacy project in the history of modern Ukraine. In 2019 we should celebrate not only Symon Petliura's 140th anniversary, but also the 100th anniversary of the European premiere of *Schedryk* and the 100th anniversary of Ukraine's cultural diplomacy.

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