

Andrij Hnatyschyn

Andrij Hnatyschyn lived and worked mainly in Austria. He was one of many Ukrainian musicians who were forced to leave their native land and work in a different cultural milieu. Carrying on the tradition and culture of folk art and church music through all his life, he was a composer, conductor and musician interested in both sacred and secular music, and active in political life through civic Ukrainian organizations. His music and creative activities mainly gravitated toward Ukrainian themes in various manifestations.

Andrij Hnatyschyn was born on 26 December 1906 in the village of Chyzykiv near Lviv, at a time when Galicia was a province of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. A teacher at the village school recognized his musical abilities and persuaded his parents to send their son to continue his studies at an academic gymnasium. While studying at the Ukrainian Academic Gymnasium in Lviv, he was a soloist in a mixed choir under the leadership of Yaroslav Vitoshynsky. In the upper grades his teacher allowed him to lead the male gymnasium choir, and he also conducted a mixed choir in his native village during vacations. During this period Hnatyschyn wrote his first song, “Za dumoiu дума” (Thought follows thought), to words by Taras Shevchenko, in a setting for male choir.

After graduation, his interest in philosophy led him to the Lviv Theological Academy in 1928. Simultaneously he was taking classes in theory and composition at the Lysenko Institute of Music. His professors at the Institute were composers Stanyslav Liudkevych, Halyna Levytska, Nestor Nyzhankivsky and Borys Kudryk.

In 1930 Hnatyschyn was working as a cultural referent for the Prosvita educational society in the Lviv region, responsible for reading rooms and the education of peasants, while conducting choirs in the villages of Chyzykiv, Pidsosniv, Myklashiv, Zapytiv, Pidberezivtsi, Vynnyky and Zashkiv. At an academy in honour of Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky of Lviv, various choirs sang at the Chamber of Commerce, but the choir from Zashkiv conducted by Hnatyschyn enjoyed the greatest success. Deeply moved, the Metropolitan stepped on stage and kissed the young conductor, promising a scholarship for further musical studies in Vienna.

In 1931 Andrij Hnatyschyn became a student of composition, conducting, and theory at the New Vienna Conservatory of Music (Neues Wiener Konservatorium). He graduated in 1934 from the class of Professor Egon Lustgarten. He continued studying polyphony, composition, counterpoint, as well as conducting and voice, in Vienna. His interest in vocal music led him to the position of conductor of the St. Barbara Ukrainian Catholic Church choir in Vienna in 1931. With the exception of the wartime period, his association with the choir would continue for the remainder of his life.

In 1939, during the German occupation of Austria, Hnatyschyn lost his post at St. Barbara's Church and instead gave private voice and piano lessons. In 1942-43 he lived in Berlin, where he sang and conducted at the Ukrainian Catholic parish. Following the war Hnatyschyn returned to Vienna, and in 1947 he acquired Austrian nationality. To supplement his income, he taught voice and piano, and participated in recitals as a piano accompanist. He also held conducting positions at St. Sabbas Serbian Orthodox and St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox parishes.

In 1954 he was reappointed conductor of St. Barbara Church and held this position to the end of his life. Owing largely to his tireless efforts, from the 1930s onwards St. Barbara Church became the center of Ukrainian culture in Austria. According to Hnatyschyn, "this church, together with the seminary, was the predominant religious and cultural center in which all Ukrainian life lived, but at the same time it was the best bridge between East and West, between the culture and creativity of our people, on the one hand, and the culture and creativity of Vienna and the whole West, on the other hand."¹ Every Sunday and on religious holidays, the choir of St. Barbara under Hnatyschyn's direction filled the church with singing. Writing about this group of like-minded artists, the conductor noted their main purpose: "The Choir's Board decided to fulfill one more important task: to demonstrate our sacred and secular musical culture to the foreigners who live in Austria and in the wider world, and thus to earn a good reputation for our Ukrainian people and to win their sympathy."²

At that time Vienna was home to many Ukrainian organizations. Among them were the Sitsch Ukrainian Academic Society, whose members mainly made up the St. Barbara Church choir, and also Family,

¹ Andrij Hnatyschyn. "Tserkva Sv. Varvary u Vidni – mistse pobutu moshchiv St. Iosafata, kolys i teper" [The Church of St. Barbara in Vienna – home of the relics of St. Josaphat, then and now] in *Dyryhent i kompozytor Andrii Hnatyshyn* [Conductor and composer Andrij Hnatyschyn]. Vienna, 1994: 134.

² Andrij Hnatyschyn. "Khor tserkvy Sv. Varvary" [Choir of the Church of St. Barbara] in *Dyryhent i kompozytor Andrii Hnatyshyn*: 161.

Community and Unity societies, the Ukrainian Catholic Brotherhood of St. Barbara, and others. Newspapers and magazines were published. Every year the Shevchenko anniversary was celebrated. Gatherings of the organizations ended with a performance of the church and secular combined choir led by Hnatyschyn. In his archives he preserved a program of the 1933 commemoration of the anniversary of the independence of Western Ukraine, which included a medley of Sich Riflemen songs, accompanied by two violins and piano. At these events Hnatyschyn presented lectures on the works of Mykola Lysenko and Alexander Koshetz.³

Formal commemorations in honour of Ivan Franko, Markiiian Shashkevych, Lesia Ukrainka and Cardinal Josyf Slipyj were held at the hall of the Italian Cultural Institute of Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky, and on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Sitsch Academic Society in Vienna. On 15 April 1956 a concert in honour of Taras Shevchenko, organized by the St. Barbara Brotherhood, included performances by a choir under the direction of Hnatyschyn, opera singer Ira Malaniuk, pianist Daria Karanowicz (later director of the Ukrainian Musical Institute in New York), cellist Bohdan Berezhnitsky and Wilhelm Baran, a violinist of the Vienna Volksoper. Hnatyschyn often wrote about these performers on the pages of Ukrainian periodicals, noting in particular performances of works by Ukrainian composers Vasyl Barvinsky, Nestor Nyzhankivsky, Dmytro Bortniansky, Viktor Kosenko and Volodymyr Hrudyn.

Hnatyschyn particularly valued the contributions of publisher and philanthropist Marian Kots, who published Zenowij Lysko's mammoth collection of Ukrainian folk songs, and works by Alexander Koshetz and Borys Kudryk.⁴

Hnatyschyn wrote especially fondly about mezzo-soprano Ira Malaniuk.⁵ In addition to her distinguished career as a leading soloist of the Vienna State Opera, Malaniuk routinely performed songs by Ukrainian composers, including Barvinsky, Nyzhankivsky, Anatol Vakhnianyn, Lysenko and Hnatyschyn. Through their creative collaboration, Malaniuk and Hnatyschyn did much to popularize Ukrainian music in western and central Europe, especially through recordings.

³ Tetiana Dannyk. *Dyryhent i kompozytor Andrii Hnatyshyn*: 10.

⁴ Later Kots would facilitate the publication of Lidia Kornii's history of Ukrainian music.

⁵ Andrii Hnatyschyn. "Nasha spivachka" [Our singer] in *Dyryhent i kompozytor Andrii Hnatyshyn*: 177.

Antin Rudnytsky described Hnatyschyn's music in the following manner: "Although Andrij Hnatyschyn's music is neither complex nor conservative, it is impressive in its own way. The simple harmonies and melodious musical language of his choral and solo songs makes them very enjoyable to sing. The harmonious, contrapuntal structure of his liturgical songs, characterized by unburdened and flowing vocal parts, complement the religious text perfectly. The melodic lines and chords, which often change between major and minor keys, retain the character of old, traditional Ukrainian Kyivan chants. His orchestral works express the spirit of the Ukrainian folk song."⁶ Hnatyschyn himself wrote that, "as a longtime conductor, primarily of church choirs, I relied primarily on Kyivan chant. I also tried to compose my original church songs in this style, to arrange and harmonize our Galician chants."⁷

Hnatyschyn's works include an opera, pieces for piano, violin and cello, liturgies, prayer services, cantatas and arrangements of Ukrainian folk songs for mixed and male chorus, and also for three-part youth choirs with piano accompaniment. One of his most interesting cycles, composed in 1972, consisted of 35 songs for bass quartet with piano accompaniment. Ten Ukrainian songs in German translation were published by Adolf Robitschek in Vienna.

Hnatyschyn's achievements in composition and the development of sacred music and choral conducting were acknowledged by the Austrian government, and in 1963 Hnatyschyn received the honorary title of Professor from the President of Austria. Hnatyschyn was active as a musicologist and music critic and wrote extensively about Ukrainian music and musicians. His works on vocal technique and the development of vocal repertoire, along with practical methods of performance of both sacred and secular choral music, were in demand both among professional singers and amateurs. The Vienna Regional Government awarded him the Golden Cross of Merit in 1977, and in 1985 Pope John Paul II bestowed upon him the title of Knight-Commander of the Order of St. Sylvester.

In the late 1950s the St. Barbara Church choir began producing LP records, which brought it great popularity among Ukrainians throughout the diaspora, and won the attention of Austrian radio. Hnatyschyn composed more than 260 original works and song arrangements, and many were recorded

⁶ Antin Rudnytsky. *Ukraïns'ka muzyka – Istorychno-krytychnyi ohliad* [Ukrainian music: a historical and critical survey]. Munich: Dniprowa Chwyla, 1963: 181-182.

⁷ Andrij Hnatyschyn. "Khor tserkvy Sv. Varvary" [Choir of the Church of St. Barbara] in *Dyryhent i kompozytor Andrii Hnatyshyn*: 162.

on long-playing records, usually performed by the St. Barbara Ukrainian Catholic Church Choir and conducted by Hnatyschyn himself.⁸ They include a Divine Liturgy, Easter songs, Ukrainian folk songs with mezzo-soprano Ira Malaniuk, accompanied by a symphony orchestra, Christmas carols, Resurrection Matins, as well as songs of the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen with orchestral accompaniment and soloist Michael Minsky. After 1978 further records of the St. Barbara Ukrainian Church Choir were issued by the Ukrainian section of Vatican Radio. Organized by Rev. Sophron Mudryj, OSBM, they included sacred songs, Ukrainian folk songs, Lenten songs, Ukrainian songs based on the poetry of Taras Shevchenko, a Divine Liturgy (1979), Ukrainian Christmas carols and Easter songs, as well as songs in praise of the Virgin Mary. In 1983, a record was released featuring Ukrainian Cossack songs, followed in 1986 by a *Moleben* to St. Volodymyr the Great to mark the Millennium of Ukrainian Christianity.

Hnatyschyn placed great importance on the popularization of Ukrainian culture through the performances of St. Barbara Choir on the airwaves of Austrian radio. “The studio department of Viennese radio taped a Divine Liturgy and vesper service. For Viennese radio we recorded church and folk songs of Ukraine, Easter and spring songs, Ukrainian carols, Sunday matins and carols of the Slavic peoples...During all broadcasts, our rite, the customs of our people and the characteristics of its creativity were explained.”⁹ As a result of these broadcasts, the choir was invited to perform at St. Stephen Cathedral in Vienna. “Austrians came away with the best impressions, seeing and hearing something new, unknown and mysterious, which they no longer see in their own churches, while Ukrainians came away with renewed and elevated spirits.”¹⁰

On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the St. Barbara Brotherhood, the choir performed at the Mozart-Saal of the Vienna Konzerthaus. A concert of Slavic music took place on 13 July 1963 in Salzburg in honour of the International Cyril and Methodius Congress. In Vienna’s Brahms-Saal, the choir performed with Ira Malaniuk. At the concert hall of the Vienna Conservatory on 8 May 1971, the choir performed Easter songs and psalms, springtime *hahilky* and other folk songs.

⁸ Igor Hnatyszyn. “Andrij Hnatyschyn: Records” in *Dyryhent i kompozytor Andrii Hnatyshyn*: 209-211.

⁹ Andrij Hnatyschyn. “Khor tserkvy Sv. Varvary” [Choir of the Church of St. Barbara] in *Dyryhent i kompozytor Andrii Hnatyshyn*: 162.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 168.

In the later years of his life, Hnatyschyn travelled to the United States, where he conducted performances of his music in Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, Philadelphia and Newark. In April 1981 he visited Canada, where his concerts took place in Edmonton and Toronto.

Andrij Hnatyschyn was a well-known and respected composer and conductor in many countries of Europe and America, but his return to his homeland was long and difficult. In 1990 he visited his home village and Lviv, where a concert of his works took place at the Philharmonic Hall. In 1993 the concert premiere of his opera *Babusyna pryhoda* (Grandmother's adventure) took place in Lviv. In October 1994 Hnatyschyn and his music reached Kyiv. At the Kyiv Organ Hall, a concert of Hnatyschyn's music, including a Divine Liturgy for mixed chorus and his arrangements of Ukrainian folk songs, was presented by the Liatoshynsky Chamber Choir conducted of Viktor Ikonnyk. By then the composer was 87 years old.

During the same visit to Kyiv, Hnatyschyn personally transferred manuscripts of his works to the music department of the Vernadsky National Library. Among them were the orchestral and piano scores of his opera *Olena* in three acts, his Divine Liturgy, Sich Riflemen songs, works for piano, violin and cello, and folk-song arrangements. In accordance with his final wishes, his son Igor Hnatyszyn transferred to the National Library the composer's personal books and score collections, his manuscripts and publications, and numerous audio recordings of his compositions on gramophone records and cassettes.

Hnatyschyn died in Vienna on 3 September 1995.

Bibliography

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Valerii Shulhyn, “Muzychno-prosvitnyts'ka diial'nist' ukraïns'koho dyryhenta i kompozytora Andriia Hnatyshyna v Avstrii” [The musical and educational activity of the Ukrainian conductor and composer Andrii Hnatyschyn in Austria], *Naukovyi visnyk Ukraïns'koï natsional'noi akademii muzyky*, 17 (2001): 276-285.

Dzvinka Vorobkalo, “Lehenda ukraïns'koho muzychnoho svitu” [Legend of the Ukrainian musical world], *Zbruč*, 26 December 2016.

List of Selected Works¹¹

Operas

- *Olena*, opera in three acts, based on the story by Markiian Shashkevych, 1980
- *Babusyna pryhoda* (Grandmother's adventure), children's opera in one act, based on a story by Oleksander Oles, 1985-66

Orchestral Works

- Ukrainian Suite ("Dumka," "Arkan," "Kruzhek," "Kolomyika"), 1936
- *Moie selo* (My village), suite in five movements, 1946
- *Proshchannia Bat'kivshchyny* (Farewell to my homeland), overture, 1948
- Ukrainian Dances, 1949

Chamber Works

- String Quartet, based on Ukrainian songs, 1952
- Five Ukrainian Carols, for violin, cello and piano, 1952

Works for Violin (or Cello) and Piano

- Romance, 1937
- "Christmas Idyll", 1940
- Dumka, 1948
- Capriccio, 1950
- Lullaby and Humoresque, 1964

Liturgies and Sacred Choral Works

- Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, in Greek, for male choir, 1938
- *Folk Divine Liturgy*, based on Galician chant, for male choir, 1942
- *Panakhida*, based on Galician chant, for mixed choir, 1953
- Divine Liturgy, based on Transcarpathian chant, for mixed choir, 1962
- Divine Liturgy, including parts for Lent and all major feast days, for mixed choir, 1965
- Divine Liturgy, for children's choir, 1966
- Divine Liturgy, for women's choir, 1968
- Resurrection Matins, 1969
- Vespers, based on Kyivan and western Ukrainian chants, 1974
- "Chicago" Divine Liturgy in D Major, for mixed choir, 1975
- Wedding Service, 1975
- Divine Liturgy in G Major, for mixed choir, 1980

¹¹ According to composer's son Igor Hnatyszyn, "No exact chronological records of Mr. Hnatyshyn's extensive compositions were kept." They were frequently recorded on Austrian radio and television, performed at amateur and professional concerts, celebrations of events pertaining to Ukrainian history. Igor Hnatyszyn. "Andrij Hnatyshyn: A Short Biography" in *Dyryhent i kompozytor Andrii Hnatyshyn*.

- Moleben to St. Volodymyr the Great, for male choir, 1981
- “Sheptytsky” Divine Liturgy, for mixed choir, 1984
- “St. Barbara” Divine Liturgy, for mixed choir, 1984
- Folk Liturgy, for mixed choir, 1985
- Moleben to St. Volodymyr the Great, for mixed choir, 1986
- Moleben to the Most Holy Mother of God and Christ, Lover of Mankind, 1989
- Numerous arrangements of tropars, kondaks, prokimens and Christmas carols

Cantatas

- *Ruka Ivana Damaskyna* (The hand of St. John of Damascus), for soloists and mixed choir, 1976
- *Khreshchennia Ukraïny* (The Baptism of Ukraine), 1988