KURBASY

U.S. Premiere (Lviv, Ukraine)

***Charmed***

***Of a mid-summer’s night***

*Devised, arranged and performed by*

Vocalist-Actors

**Maria Oneshchak**

**Myroslava Rachynska**

**Natalia Rybka-Parkhomenko**

*with*

**Vsevolod Sadovyj**  multi-instrumentalist

**Artem Kamenkov**  double bass

**Markiian Turkanyk** violin

**Volodymyr Stetskovych** video & lighting designer and vj

**Ruslan Kharchenko** sound engineer

Kurbasy is a presentation of Center Stage, a public diplomacy initiative of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, administered by the New England Foundation for the Arts in cooperation with the U.S. Regional Arts Organizations, with support from the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, and the Trust for Mutual Understanding. General management is provided by Lisa Booth Management, Inc.

Song List

1. **Blagoslovy Bozhe** / Your Blessings, oh Lord!

2. **Oy hodyla Olenka**/ Olenka

3. **Posluhayte podruzhechky** / Girlfriends, listen to where the doves coo

4. **Oy otse zh tobi** / Oh This is for You My Dear Mother

5. **Oy hodyla da moloda** / The Bride is walking

6. **Nenko moya** / My Mother

7. **Chuite koni** / Hear the Horses

8. **Zasiyalo sriblo-zloto** / Gold and Silver Glitter

9. **Zpoza gory** / Beyond the Mountain the Moon Arose

10.**Da bulo v tioshchi** / Mother-in-law

11. **Soromitky** / Soromitky

12 **Kolomyiky** / Pear

13. **Konyky** / Horses

14. **Oy borovaya** / Nightingale

15. **Oy ne hody Hrytsiu** / Oh Hyrts, Don’t Go

16. **Oy ne stiy verbo** / Oh Willow, Don’t Go

17. **Na nashiy yuloytsi** / On our Road

18. **Shyrokaya nyvka** / In the wide Fields

19. **Na vysokiy polonyni** / In the Mountain Meadows

Translations of selected songs

**2. Oy hodyla Olenka**/ Olenka

Oh, Olenka went through the oak grove

To collect her maids, her beloved trove

And in the while of their pursuit

A dew dust glazed in absolute

Ah, it glazed the braid around her face

Its whiteness framed by beautiful grace

4. **Oy otse zh tobi** / Oh This is for You My Dear Mother

Oh, this is for you my dear mother as I leave, with pardon

I planted a rose bush to grow in your garden

Grow and grow, grow roses without ever bending

Live and live, live oh mother without worries never ending

Oh, how can I not bend when the whimpering winds whirl as ever

Oh, how can I not worry—my child is gone forever

Children once ran all around, here and there everywhere

Now my poor bare child has been given to a marriage pair

9. **Zpoza gory** / Beyond the Mountain the Moon Arose

Beyond the mountain the moon arose

And on through the gates a bachelor strode

Round and round the garden he walks

All alone to himself he talksl

His beloved so far-off, he balks

I can’t now write her a letter

No, it’s too far to go get her

First I will write her a letter

So people will know me better

There are no people like neighbors

Who will spread the word, like favors

You, oh moon, light the way clearly

You, oh horse, tread the way dearly

As they got to her garden doors

The golden beloved, she came towards

She took the horse away by reign

And her beloved she took by hand

She led the horse to the stable

And her beloved to the table

14. **Oy borovaya** / Nightingale

Nightingale Nightingale! The green rye has bent! Nightingale…

Nightingale Nightingale “Petrivka’s” soberness is near its end!...

Nightingale Nightingale “Petrivka” fasting will soon be over!...

Nightingale Nightingale Make a match for Halochka, my daughter!...

Nightingale Nightingale A curled horned cow to the one who sought her!...

Nightingale Nightingale My dark browed beauty that nature has brought her!...

Oh you cuckoo of the forest woods

Oh don’t coo so early in the oak grove

Oh don’t coo so early in the oak grove

Don’t awaken my stirring my youth

For I am still young, but dutiful

I have taken my father-in-law’s orders

Yes my father-in-law has given orders

And with banging buckets I’ve made order!

And I have given my mother-in-law a drink

To stop her complaining in a wink!

17. **Na nashiy yuloytsi** / On our Road

On our road the girls gathered around, hey the girls gathered around

The oldest girl was young Marynka, hey young Marynka

Young Marynka sowed her rue seeds, sowed her rue seeds

Sowed her rue, waited for the bloom, then a wreath she made.

A wreath she made and placing it upon the Dunai River it laid.

Upon the Dunai she placed it with this intention on her lips:

“He who chooses this wreath is the one who will take my hand.”

Oh it was young Vasylko who answered her call,

“I will choose the wreath, I will take Marynka’s hand”

He fell into the river bed, head over heels, and drowned.

Fell into the river and his cap floated away, never again to crown.

Young Marynka’s life was drowned in sorrow

19. **Na vysokiy polonyni** / In the Mountain Meadows

In grassy meadows yon, on high

Grass Cutters cut the grass

To them some girls would come stop by

Waterbearing lasses.

Hey I cut the grass, the grass

And still will cut its aftermath

Hey I’d like a girlfriend

A young appealing sass

Hey I cut the grass the grass

High or low its end

Hey I’d like a girlfriend

Who is tall and slender

Hey how can I let this musing go

On about my sweetheart

When I don’t know how to mow

Grass at its greenest part

**About the Program**

Lviv, the eons-old Carpathian hub, holds Ukraine’s cultural core. Around this nucleus, spheres of tradition and innovation spin, collide and reform. The idea of culture as a cosmic living organism is central to Kurbasy, whose folk-based multimedia performances vibrate in polyphonic vocal harmonies, resonant lyrics, culturally unique instruments, and phantasmagoric visual imagery.

Conceived and directed by the band’s three actress-singers, Kurbasy’s sonic-theatrical explorations of Ukraine’s rich trove of calendar song cycles, lullabies, and legends, conjure the natural world, beliefs, and rituals, tracing contemporary connections to an archaic past.

*With the blessings of God, of Father and Mother, Begin the Wedding! From beginning to end, may this union bring Joy to this Family and its Ancestors.*

Ukrainian wedding songs are ancient beings, linking past to present to celebrate and support the rituals of marriage. The main character in the Bride, surrounded by the voices of her parents, relatives and friends. Formerly a girl, she is now "Moloda" – preparing to become a Young Woman. It is a time when she gathers her friends to say goodbye as she will leave them to become a wife. She plants flowers as a grateful keepsake of living beauty in her mother’s garden as a means to ask forgiveness and help overcome the sorrow of leaving her family for good. These songs can be heavy, with the burden of parents losing their beloved daughter. And at other times they can be a jovial means to overcome the fear of all the new and unknown things to come. On the horses she will ride, to the steep mountain, to the sacred temple shining in her silver and gold where she will bow before all the saints, whispering her prayers of promise. Her tears will flow as rivers as she steps into a rebirth and enter her new life.

In the Middle of Summer, at the zenith of the Sun, a celebration is performed. The Sun is at “his” peak and announces his intention to unite with Water – he has found his bride with whom to start life anew. On the night before this summer solstice – known as St. Johns Day/St. Ivan’s Day (and also Kupala Day) great bonfires burn along the rivers to reenact this Marriage of Elements. Young people join to circle around the fires. Living streams of dancers flow from circle to circle. Girls take off their wreaths of flowers and place them upon the river. Boys make and guide fire wheels to the water. The spirits of these young people become purified by the fire’s flame. A couple will jump through the fire holding hands in testimony to the honesty of their feelings for one another. If they land still holding hands, their love is revealed to be eternal. A gigantic figure of Morena made of willow branches is burned; the river transcends into her willowed body from which bright burning flames emerge. A flowered figure made of straw, Kupalo, the embodiment of sunlight, is taken to his union with the river. There he bathes, succumbs to the Water, and sinks to its depth. I John/Ivan went to bathe, so should we! Hundreds will take part in this fire and water dance – a dance everyone should join! With our living presence we celebrate the Marriage and unite the energy of its life force which derives from beyond all time and space: Lineage, the Charmed Miracle of Creation, and the driving force of Love.

*-- Special thanks to Julie-Anne Franko for her song text translations, and assistance in preparing these notes.*

About the Artists

**Kurbasy** is an avant-garde musical project of the renowned progressive Les Kurbas Theatre in Lviv, Ukraine. Started in 2008 as an informal vocal gathering of singer-actresses during rehearsals for other theater productions, in the last two years Kurbasy has performed across Europe-from the front lines of occupied Eastern Ukraine to concert halls in Western Europe. The ambient approach of Kurbasy gives life to the indigenous polyphonic sounds of Ukraine’s rich traditional music heritage. Founded as a female a capella vocal trio, Kurbasy is now experimenting with the sounds of Ukrainian instruments – zither, cymbals, tambourine, drums, with violin and contrabass. The theatrical background of the group is a core component of Kurbasy's esthetic. The music they perform is tied to, celebrates, and renews the rituals, the memories, the cycles of Ukraine and her people.

**Maria Oneshchak** was born in the historic city of Ivano-Frankivsk in Southwest Ukraine, and moved to Lviv to study drama and psychology at Ivan Franco National University. In 2004 she joined the Les Kurbas Theatre as an actress. She co-founded and directs Kurbasy.

**Myroslava Rachynska** is a film and theater actress, and singer, and a native Lviv. She received studied computer science at Lviv’s National University but ultimately earned degrees in music and choreography; she also studied studio art. She has served on the faculty of Les Kurbas Theatre for 18 years. She is a co-founder and director of Kurbasy and also takes part in many independent international projects.

**Natalia Rybka-Parkhomenko** is a native of Kharkiv, a city in eastern Ukraine. A conservatory graduate, she majored in drama and film acting. She has worked with various theaters and participated at a number of acting and musical projects across Ukraine and abroad. A resident actor at Lviv’s Les Kurbas Theatre for last 12 years, she also teaches acting and is a vocal coach. she co-founded and directs Kurbasy.

**Vsevolod Sadovyj** (multi-instrumentalist), a native of Lviv, graduated from Lviv National Music Conservatory with a master’s degree in music. He is a concert performer and conductor in the division of wind and percussion instruments at the Conservatory. In addition to his academic work, he is interested and engaged in researching and performing historically-informed music and instruments, singing folklore, and instrumental dance music -- including modern genres of electronic music. Since 2010 he has performed with Liudy dobri (folk), Gych Orchestra (ethno fusion), and Lemko Bluegrass Band (folk, country bluegrass). He joined Kurbasy as a collaborator in 2012.

**Artem Kamenkov**, (bass) is a Lviv native who studied at the Lviv National Music Conservatory. He is the principal double bass player of the Lviv Symphony Orchestra, and is involved with many other music projects including Kurbasy, the Lemko Bluegrass Band, and Marija Kopytchak ta Orchestra Pochuvanj (Marija Kopytchak and the Orchestra of Feelings), which have taken him on tour to all parts of Ukraine, and to Poland, Germany, France, Italy, and Canada.

**Markiian Turkanyk** (violin), was born in Ternopil, Ukraine and graduated from Lviv National Music Conservatory where he is now a Lecturer of orchestral string Instruments. He is a member of Lviv’s symphony orchestra, chamber ensemble and a solo concert performer. Since 2008, he has also performed with Liudy dobri (folk), Gych Orchestra (ethno fusion), Lemko Bluegrass Band (folk, country bluegrass) and began collaborating with Kurbasy in 2012.

**Volodymyr Stetskovych** (projections and lighting designer and vj) lives and works in Lviv, Ukraine. He is the art director and scenic designer, responsible for the overall visual designs of Les Kurbas theatre. He also creates 3D mapping projections (art shows) on buildings (exterior and interior).

**Ruslan Kharchenko** (sound engineer) is a native of Kyiv andgraduated from Kyiv Natural Science Lyceum # 145. He works as a sound engineer for several Ukrainian bands and rental companies. Also I am PhD student at Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, specialty: physics.

**KURBASY** makes its U.S debut tour October 21-November 18, 2018 as part of Center Stage. Stops include Washington DC, New York City, Hartford CT, Worcester MA, Memphis TN, Sonoma CA, Albuquerque and Santa Fe NM, and Seattle WA. For more information and the complete schedule, visit [www.centerstageUS.org](http://www.centerstageUS.org)

**Center Stage** invites performing artists from select countries to the United States to perform, meet, and share their experiences with communities around the country. Now in its fourth season, by the end of 2018, 29 ensembles from Algeria, Egypt, Haiti, Indonesia, Morocco, Pakistan, Tanzania, Ukraine, and Vietnam will have made independent month-long tours from coast to coast, hosted by colleges and universities, festivals, music clubs, and cultural centers. Each tour includes residencies in large cities and small towns, and a range of activities from performances, workshops, and discussions, to artist-to-artist exchanges, master classes, and community gatherings. Center Stage artists engage with audiences onstage, offstage, and online sharing their work with audiences in the U.S. and friends and fans at home to build mutual understanding through shared cultures and values.

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