

# SHUMKA

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...IS SHUMKA

## Background

The early 20th century saw a massive wave of Ukrainian immigration to North America, many fleeing from oppressive regimes and violent wars that threatened the lives and culture of the Ukrainian people. These early immigrants arrived in North America with very little, but little did they know that they brought along with them something that would grow over the next century into a vibrant art form to be performed for Queens, Prime Ministers, and millions of people worldwide.



Established in 1959, the Ukrainian Shumka Dancers began with an eager group of Ukrainian youth gathering in the basement of a local Ukrainian church, many children and grandchildren of these first immigrants, and some even newcomers themselves. These early practitioners of Ukrainian dance were inspired by the teachings of those such as Vasyl Avramenko, who gave Ukrainians in North America an early glimpse at how the simple traditional folk dances passed down through their families could be transformed into a performing artform for the world stage.



With its inaugural performance at EXPO '67 in Montreal, Shumka was introduced to the world stage, embarking on a journey into the mainstream arts community on the Canadian landscape and beyond. Commitment to Ukrainian folk culture, dedication and education were and continue to be the cornerstones of Shumka.



## The Company

Shumka's current artistic vision is a result of new generations of artists bringing new perspectives on what Ukrainian dance means to them, built layer by layer upon the foundation of traditions and history laid down by the company's founders. Shumka Artistic Director, Tasha Orysiuk, describes Shumka's artistic product as "a constantly evolving mix of storybook and thematic dance theatre suited to every audience who loves beautiful dance and great stories."

Shumka strives to be the spearhead of folk arts into the mainstream arts community, without sacrificing the elements of Ukrainian folk dance which are indispensable in maintaining the character and unspoken charm of the art form.

Shumka produces a range of full-length stage productions, from folk-inspired story-theatre productions like *Mosquito's Wedding*, to one-of-a-kind adaptations of classic works including *Shumka's Cinderella* and *Shumka's Nutcracker*. Shumka's affinity for abstract story-telling is demonstrated in more poetic, symbolic works, such as *Kobzar* and *Ukrainka* - both inspired by two of Ukraine's largest literary figures, Taras Shevchenko and Lesya Ukrainka.

Shumka's typical performing season includes a Winter and a Spring presentation, along with multiple festival and community pop-up performances throughout the year. Shumka strives to present works across Canada and abroad as often as they are able, as the company believes it is important to its mission to share the ever-evolving Ukrainian dance art form with new audiences.



## Collaborations

One of Shumka's mainstays since its inception has been the importance of artistic collaborations. Shumka has worked intimately with artists and professionals locally and abroad, ranging from the Running Thunder Cree Dancers of Alberta to the National Ballet of Ukraine. Some of Shumka's other prominent collaborators include Julie Andrews, Christopher Plummer, Andrea Bocelli, Ruslana, the Ukrainian Bandurist Chorus of North America, and the Virsky National State Dance Ensemble. Composers, set and costume designers, musicians, and choreographers from Ukraine are often part of Shumka's creative team.

Beyond the professional performing company, Shumka operates a dance school with more than 225 students annually, a pre-professional training ensemble called Studia Shumka, a state-of-the-art dance studio and arts hub in Edmonton's downtown, and a thriving outreach division, including its popular summer camps, classes for youth with disabilities, and a variety of seniors programming.





## Shumka School of Dance

The Shumka School of Dance (SSD) provides Ukrainian regional, character, Royal Academy of Dance (R.A.D.) ballet, contemporary dance, and Shumka-style training to students three years of age and up. The SSD offers training through core and intensive training divisions, the latter of which provides students with a further elevated level of instruction for those who wish to pursue Ukrainian dance as a professional artist with the performing company. All SSD training divisions include instruction of North America's only syllabus for Ukrainian dance, designed to ensure a culturally and technically enriched training progression.

The SSD prides itself in its effort to make Ukrainian dance accessible and welcoming to those of all demographics and backgrounds, and acknowledges the strength of community that has been built within the school as a result of its efforts of diversity and inclusion.



## Studia

In addition to the intensive training division, Studia Shumka was launched in 2018 as a bridging program between the school and professional company. This junior performing ensemble trains for over 10 hours per week as well as having built a repertoire for performances throughout the community.

On occasion they train, rehearse and perform with the professional company in preparation for their next step into Shumka.



## Facility

In 2016, the Shumka Dance Centre was unveiled: a 14,000 square-foot arts facility on the edge of Edmonton's ICE district. The studio was designed by Shumka to accommodate the ever-growing company, junior ensemble, and the dance school simultaneously, as well as offer much needed rehearsal space for other performing groups in the Edmonton area. The facility offers four state-of-the-art dance studios equipped with sprung floors and sound proofing, as well as affordable office space for local small businesses.



## Community Outreach

Shumka has a thriving outreach division that focusses on community involvement and education. Programs include summer camps for all ages, seniors fitness programming, instruction for youth with disabilities, and school field trips. Shumka's outreach initiatives also include special student matinees at the Jubilee Auditorium which are targeted to school groups and adapted to be interactive for young audiences. For these student matinees, Shumka also provides study guides with suggested classroom activities related to the performance and tied into the Alberta Education curriculum.



## Legacy

Shumka's legacy has been weaved carefully over 60+ years of developing, creating, and presenting dance in North America. In order to protect this legacy and to keep red boots on the world stage for years to come, Shumka unveiled the Whirlwind Endowment Fund through the Edmonton Community Foundation in 2020.

An endowment fund is a pool of money invested by an organization with the promise of a yearly return that can be used by the organization to cover expenses. Giving to the Whirlwind Endowment means that your dollars continue to help generate new revenue for Shumka year after year. In becoming a Whirlwind Endowment donor, you tie your legacy to Shumka's; you become the "whirlwind" at the back of Shumka dancers for years to come.

With an endowment goal of \$12,500,000 and an estimated yearly return of 4%, Shumka would be left with \$500,000 per year in revenue that can go towards areas normally subsidized by regular donations from our beloved patrons, such as administration, creation of new works, touring and presentation, school operation fees, and facility rent.

*"Supporting the Ukrainian Shumka Dancers means investing in a world-class dance company that has earned admiration and respect far beyond our local community. Shumka's performances celebrate the artistry, athleticism, and spirit of Ukrainian culture, captivating audiences around the world. By being a donor, not only am I helping preserve and advance this exceptional art form, but I'm also ensuring Shumka's impact resonates globally. This is a unique opportunity to champion a cultural legacy that deserves support on the international stage."*

– Nadine Samycia (Member with Distinction, former Board Member, and Donor)



Shumka's endowment donors are the keepers of Shumka's legacy: they truly are the Whirlwind on Shumka's back.

For now, the Whirlwind Endowment is quite young and does not yet have the funds to support Shumka's yearly financial needs. Until the endowment reaches close to its \$12.5M goal, Shumka still must rely on the continued generosity of its donors, sponsors, partners and funders.

Individual and corporate gifts make up a portion of Shumka's annual revenue, and as Shumka grows as an organization, the strength of our donor base must grow as well.

You can be part of Shumka's legacy by:

- Contributing a one-time donation
- Creating an endowment legacy gift
- Planned giving (will or life insurance)
- Monthly giving
- Working with us as a Presentation Sponsor for a production
- Providing Facility Sponsorship
- Supporting the artists through a Dancer or Student Sponsorship

To contribute please contact Shumka or visit:

<https://www.shumka.com/support/donate/>

Thank you for your generous support!



*"Bill and I gratefully donate to Shumka to see the magic continue on stage. We know without donations arts groups are hard-pressed to stay financially viable. We are happy to contribute to Shumka, an organization that has been such an integral part of our and our children's lives."*

– MaryAnn (Member with Distinction) and Bill Baziuk (Honorary Member), Volunteers & Donors



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[www.shumka.com](http://www.shumka.com)