

SHUMKA
UKRAINIAN SHUMKA DANCERS



Edmonton
Medicine Hat
Calgary
2026

SHUMKA

BACK TO OUR

ROOTS





LEXUS OF EDMONTON

Lexus of Edmonton is proud to be a long-standing supporter of the arts and a dedicated partner of the Ukrainian Shumka Dancers. We believe in celebrating culture, creativity, and community—values that are beautifully brought to life through every Shumka performance. It is an honour to support an organization that continues to inspire and enrich our city.

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MESSAGE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

Welcome—we are so happy you are here with us tonight.

This program is a celebration of our roots, our history, and the vibrant spirit of Ukrainian dance. At Shumka, tradition is not something we look back on—it is something we carry forward with pride. Ukrainian dance is filled with energy, strength, humour, beauty, and heart, and it is a joy for us to share that with you.

Over the years, we have been incredibly fortunate to work with so many inspiring choreographers who have shaped Shumka’s artistic voice. Their creativity and dedication have helped build the repertoire you see on stage tonight, and we are grateful to continue bringing their work to life.

This performance reflects the many sides of who we are—celebration, storytelling, resilience, and joy. Even in challenging times, culture remains a source of strength. We think often of our friends and family in Ukraine and continue to hold them close in our hearts. Through dance, we honour them—and we celebrate the enduring spirit of Ukraine.

I hope you feel the energy, the passion, and the pride in every step. Thank you for supporting Shumka and for helping us keep Ukrainian culture alive and strong.

With gratitude,

Tasha Orysiuk, Artistic Director



MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

Since joining Shumka in July 2025, I have felt both honoured and humbled to be part of a company with such a rich and enduring legacy. For more than six decades, Shumka has brought Ukrainian dance to stages in Edmonton and beyond, sustained by generations of artists, teachers, and community members whose dedication continues to shape who we are today.

Back to Our Roots is a reflection of that legacy, grounded in tradition while alive in the present. It reminds us that these dances are not only preserved, but continually renewed through the commitment, artistry, and passion of those who carry them forward.

It is a privilege to work alongside the dancers, instructors, and supporters who bring this work to life with such care. Thank you for being here and for celebrating this journey with us.

Jake Tkaczyk, Managing Director



ABOUT SHUMKA

Established in Edmonton in 1959, the Ukrainian Shumka Dancers is Canada's only professional Ukrainian dance company. Seen by millions on international television broadcasts, the company has presented command performances for Queens, Prime Ministers, and Presidents, and have performed alongside the likes of Andrea Bocelli, Julie Andrews, and Principal Dancers of the National Ballet of Ukraine. Along with Alberta Ballet and Edmonton Opera, Shumka is honoured to be a resident company of the Northern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium. In October of 2025, the company was inducted into the Dance Collection Danse Hall of Fame in Canada.

More than 65 years of performance history has shaped Shumka's signature music and dance style. While maintaining deep respect for their heritage, Shumka continually challenges conventional boundaries to define the experience of Ukrainian dance in the context of today's society.

Shumka creates original works with universal themes in collaboration with choreographers, composers and designers in Ukraine and Canada. Over the last decade, these dance theatre pieces have included *Kobzar*, *Ancestors & Elders*, *Mosquito's Wedding*, *Echoes of Hopak*, *UKRAINKA*, and numerous award-winning film works including *Dancing on Eggshells* and *Promised Land*.

Shumka presents *Canada's Ukrainian Nutcracker* annually in Edmonton and other Canadian centres. A magical production of the Christmas classic, this *Nutcracker* incorporates Ukrainian traditions, folk and character dance, grand orchestral versions of the legendary score with specially added compositions, and Ukrainian symbols woven into lavish sets and costumes. The performance is a graceful, joyfully conceived presentation of enchantment embracing a classic tale of young Clara and her dream Prince.

The Shumka School of Dance trains over 200 students using North America's only syllabus for Ukrainian dance, in addition to contemporary movement and RAD ballet instruction. Studia Shumka—a pre-professional ensemble and bridging program between the School and the professional company—was established in the Fall of 2018. Shumka also offers Ukrainian-dance and RAD-based fitness classes for seniors and adults including its popular Seniors Can Shumka and Silver Swans.

The Shumka Dance Centre is based in downtown Edmonton, nestled between the Ice District and Brewery District. Since it opened in 2016, the Centre has established itself as a vibrant artistic hub in the local community.

UKRAINIAN SHUMKA DANCERS CAST

Jacob August
 Katelyn August
 Ethan Bogner ●
 Annikka Dobko ●
 Joseph Ewaskiw ●
 Sasha Ferdycz
 Zoriana Ferdycz
 Kostya Frolov
 Taras Geleta
 Viktoriya Glozhyk
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 Nicolas Pacholok
 Mara Palahniuk
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 Daria Podilsky
 Mark Rachmistruk
 Mikalina Rylance
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 Sophia Sereda
 Alyssa Shukalek
 Julianna Shukalek
 Danica Skitsko
 Rachel Starko
 Alex Stasiuk
 Murray Steele
 Sam Stychyshyn
 Leda Tarnawsky ●

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 Ashlyn Waller
 Kieran Waller
 Vanessa Wynnyk
 Zachary Wynnyk
 Nathan Yost
 Luke Zakordonski
 Zane Zimmerman
 Michael Zukiwsky

- *Apprentice Dancer*
- ★ *Studia Bridging Program*
- *Artistic Committee*





THE PROGRAM

Ukrainian dance has long been a celebration of life, community, and resilience. This evening's program takes us on a journey through the rhythms of Ukrainian culture—from the joy and abundance of the harvest, to moments of humour and playfulness that reflect the spirit of everyday life. We also pause to remember the courage and sacrifice of those affected by the ongoing war in Ukraine, honouring the strength of a people who continue to endure. And finally, we celebrate! Through every challenge, Ukrainian culture, music, and dance continue to live on with pride and hope.

Together, these moments form a journey through **Harvest**, **Playfulness**, **Remembrance**, and **Celebration**, reflecting the spirit of Ukraine and its people.

HARVEST

Harvest Princesses (*from Cinderella*)

Bukovynska Zabava (*from Cinderella*)

Dubotanets' (*inspired by traditional Dubotanets*)

Polissian (*from Cinderella*)

Obzhynky (*from Cycles of the Sun*)

This opening section celebrates the beauty, abundance, and traditions of the harvest season. These Harvest Princesses, representing different regions of Ukraine, appear throughout the section and carry wheat sheaves that reflect the richness and pride of the land. Regional dances bring the celebration to life—from the lively rhythms of Bukovyna to the playful traditions of Polissia. The section builds toward *Obzhynky*, the traditional final harvest celebration, where wheat is gathered and bread and salt are presented as symbols of gratitude, welcome, and unity.



PLAYFULNESS

Boys' Boot Dance (*from Katrusia*)

Cobblers I (*from Cinderella*)

Cobblers II (*from Cinderella*)

Oy, Susidko (*from Echoes of Hopak*)

Tambourine (*classic couples dance*)

Here we bring a playful theatrical spirit to the stage, blending humour, character dance, and virtuosic Ukrainian movement. Inspired by scenes from *Katrusia* and *Cinderella*, the dances begin with the *Boys' Boot Dance*, a lively display of youthful bravado filled with energetic footwork and spirited competition. In the cobbler's workshop, a master boot maker briefly attempts to teach his apprentices the craft, but the boys quickly become distracted, turning the workshop into playful mischief. Girls arrive to receive their new boots, resulting in playful interactions and spirited partnering. The section concludes with *Oy, Susidko*, a dynamic women's dance celebrating the strength and precision of the Shumka ladies, and *Tambourine*, a vibrant couples dance filled with lively rhythms and joyful celebration.

REMEMBRANCE

Borotba (from *Pathways to Hopak*)

Requiem (from *Pathways to Hopak*)

My Yeh (from *Shumka on Tour*)

This section reflects on the ongoing war in Ukraine and honours the courage, sacrifice, and resilience of its people. In *Borotba*, men and women prepare and train for battle, expressing strength, discipline, and unity as they face the emotional weight of leaving home to defend their country. *Requiem* follows as a powerful and deeply emotional work in which women search for their fallen loved ones. The dancers embody grief, love, and remembrance. The section concludes with *My Yeh*, representing three generations of women in Ukraine who face devastation, share strength, and ultimately remind us that hope and resilience can be carried forward together.

Warning: We understand that the themes and subject matter of “Remembrance” may be emotionally unsettling for some audience members. Please feel free to leave the theatre during this section. Ushers will help you return to auditorium seating prior to Hopak.



CELEBRATION

Classic Hopak (from *Shumka’s 25th Anniversary Tour*)

After remembrance comes renewal. The evening concludes with the exhilarating energy of *Hopak*, a triumphant celebration of Ukrainian culture. Athletic jumps, virtuosic footwork, and vibrant ensemble dancing fill the stage with joy and national pride. It is a powerful declaration that Ukrainian culture endures—a final expression of resilience, spirit, and celebration.



Shumka acknowledges the vision and dedication of the following choreographers who created and/or adapted the original works performed years ago—and this evening. Their talent and commitment bring important stories to the stage, and allow us to share, preserve and celebrate our culture with our audiences.

Ukrainian Shumka Dancers, John Pichlyk, Viktor Lytvynov, Dave Ganert, Leslie Sereda, Gordon Gordey, Paul Olijnyk, Alyssa Eugenio, Tasha Orysiuk, Leda Tarnawsky, Vincent Rees, Jorden Morris

CREDITS

Artistic Director

Tasha Orysiuk

Composers

Yuri Shevchenko

Andriy Shoost

Gene Zwozdesky

Repetiteurs

Alyssa Eugenio

Paul Olijnyk

Ballet Mistress

Margaret Dalwood

Original Costume Design

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Shumka School of Dance

Studia Shumka

Excerpts from *Cinderella* and *Pathways to Hopak*
directed and conceived by Gordon Gordey

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You make such a difference with your support and Shumka is grateful. As donors, you keep our boots dancing and our dreams alive!

Shumka is ever grateful and acknowledges the following individuals, families, companies, foundations, and funders for their generous help. This list recognizes all monetary and in-kind donations received **August 1, 2023 to April 6, 2026.**

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SHUMKA

The image shows three dancers in traditional Shumka folk costumes performing on a stage. The costumes are white with intricate colorful embroidery in red, green, and yellow. They wear dark hats with colorful bands. The background is a dark blue, textured wall. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

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