UKRAINIAN
CONTEMPORARY
MUSIC
FESTIVAL

FEBRUARY 26 AND 27. 2027

ECHOES OF HISTORY

BRIDGING TIME

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

Ukrainian Contemporary Music Festival (UCMF) announces 2027 Festival "Echoes of History"

February 26 and 27, 2027

01

Co-presented with the Ukrainian Institute in Kyiv, UCMF 2027 features a first-of-its-kind "Sylvestrov-a-thon", a day-long marathon of the composer's music in celebration of his 90th birthday year on Feb 27, 2027

02

Performances by Talea Ensemble, The Rhythm Method, and Ukrainian Music Initiative will examine ways composers revisit, transform, and carry forward musical ideas across generations

03

"Moments of Memory" by Talea Ensemble on Feb 26, 2027 will feature world premieres by Jason Eckardt and Maksym Ivanov, a co-commission in partnership with the Ukrainian Classical Music Foundation

04

For the first time, UCMF concerts will take place across multiple boroughs in New York City: the DiMenna Center for Classical Music and St. Bartholomew Hall in Clinton Hill, Brooklyn, home base of Talea Ensemble

ECHOES OF HISTORY

NEW YORK, NY — The Ukrainian Contemporary Music Festival (UCMF) returns to New York City February 26 and 27, 2027, for its eighth season, **"Echoes of History"**, examining the ways composers revisit, transform, and carry forward musical ideas across generations.

UCMF 2027: Echoes of History takes its cue from **Valentyn Sylvestrov's** concept of **"metaphorical music"**, the idea that music can respond to, echo, and transform what came before. As Sylvestrov put it: "I do not write new music. My music is a response to and an echo of what already exists." The Festival is anchored by a daylong **"Sylvestrov-a-thon"** on Saturday, February 27, 2027 celebrating his 90th birthday year. The programs will trace his evolution from the radical experimentation of the 1960s and 1970s to the deeply personal musical language of his later work, which embodies an especially vivid example of history becoming material for the present.

“Ukrainian music has a long history of dialogue with the broader canon of Western classical music. Ukraine’s most famous living composer, Valentyn Sylvestrov, embodies this engagement. This celebration of his life and works, marking the 90th anniversary of his birth, gives us the opportunity to reflect on the exchanges between Ukrainian music and the rest of the world,”

SAID UCMF CREATIVE DIRECTOR DR. LEAH BATSTONE.

“We are especially honored to be joined by so many remarkable soloists for the daylong Sylvestrov-a-thon, as well as by Talea Ensemble, The Rhythm Method, and Ukrainian Music Initiative. We are grateful that they will give voice to over a dozen Ukrainian, American, and other European composers on the program this year.”

26

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26
MOMENTS OF MEMORY

On Friday, February 26, 2027, UCMF will collaborate with the acclaimed **Talea Ensemble** for an evening of contemporary music exploring "Moments of Memory" at Talea's home base St. Bartholomew Hall, located inside the Church of St. Luke & St. Matthew in Clinton Hill, Brooklyn. The program begins with *Under Skyline* by **Maxim Kolomiiets**, whose opera *The Mothers of Kherson* will receive its U.S. Premiere at The Metropolitan Opera in 2028. **Alexey Shmurak** reimagines classical mythology in *I have lost my Euridice*, and **Polina Pohozha's** *Likitsary* draws on a deeply personal experience of an ancient village in western Ukraine, where landscape and Ukrainian legends become intertwined. In *Clocks for Seeing*, **Anthony Cheung** takes inspiration from Roland Barthes's reflections on photography, meditation, and time, and similarly **Karmella Tsepkolenko's** *Faust Celebration*, with text by Ukrainian writer Yuri Andrukhovych, revisits the age-old pursuit of knowledge and truth through a contemporary literary lens. The program also features the world premiere of **Jason Eckardt's** *Piano Trio* and *Shades of White № 5* by **Maksym Ivanov**, the winning work of a new co-commission in partnership with the **Ukrainian Classical Music Foundation**.

27

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27
SYLVESTROV-A-THON

On Saturday, February 27, 2027, UCMF unleashes the **Sylvestrov-a-thon**, a daylong musical marathon devoted to **Valentyn Sylvestrov** on the occasion of his 90th birthday year. The concert will take place at the DiMenna Center for Classical Music in New York City. This first-of-its-kind program moves beyond a singular portrait and places him in the context of the sound worlds that came before, during, and after, instrument by instrument, from songs to piano pieces, chamber works, and string quartets. Throughout the day, leading Sylvestrov scholar **Dr. Peter J. Schmelz** will offer commentary on his life and work. The Sylvestrov-a-thon will be performed by pianist of Alarm Will Sound **John Orfe**, pianist **Anna Shelest**, violinist **Solomiya Ivakhiv**, pianist **Nadia Shpachenko-Gottesman**, clarinetist **Gleb Kanasevich**, and cellist **Valeriya Sholokhova** and contralto **Vira Slywotzky** of the **Ukrainian Music Initiative**. In the evening finale, the fierce string quartet **The Rhythm Method** pairs his works with composers who illuminate different corners of musical time: **Anton von Webern's** *String Quartet, Op. 28*, **George Rochberg's** *Third String Quartet*, and **Missy Mazzoli's** *Enthusiasm Strategies* join Sylvestrov's *Quartetto Piccolo* and *String Quartets Nos. 1 and 3*. The result is less a retrospective than a musical family tree, with a few unexpected relatives.

Concert Listings

26

FEBRUARY 26, 2027
7:30 P.M.

Moments of Memory with Talea Ensemble

February 26, 2027 at 7:30 p.m. | St. Bartholomew Hall, Clinton Hill, Brooklyn

MAXIM KOLOMIIETS

Under Skyline (2023)

for voice, flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, and harp

ANTHONY CHEUNG

Clocks for Seeing (2023)

for flute, clarinet, piano/keyboard, violin, viola, and cello

JASON ECKARDT

Piano Trio (2026) *

ALEXEY SHMURAK

I have lost my Euridice (2014)

for string quartet, piano, double bass, flute, oboe, clarinet in B, bassoon, and horn in F

POLINA POHOZHA

Likitsary (2023)

for two sopranos, violin, viola, bass, trombone, and piano

KARMELLA TSEPKOLENKO

Faust Celebration (2012)

cantata for soprano, flute, clarinet, piano, violin, and cello (text by Yuri Andrukhovych)

MAKSYM IVANOV **

Shades of White № 5 (2027) *

* *world premiere*

** *winner of the Co-Commission with the Ukrainian Classical Music Foundation*

27

FEBRUARY 27, 2027
FROM 1:00 P.M.

Sylvestrov-a-thon

February 27, 2027 beginning at 1:00 p.m. | The DiMenna Center for Classical Music

A daylong celebration of composer Valentyn Sylvestrov.

SCHEDULE OVERVIEW

12:00 P.M.		Doors open
12:30 P.M.		Opening reflections by Dr. Peter J. Schmelz
1:00 P.M.	PART 1	Solos and Duos I
2:00 P.M.	PART 2	Piano Works I
3:00 P.M.	PART 3	Vocal Music
4:00 P.M.	PART 4	Solos and Duos II
5:00 P.M.	PART 5	Piano Works II
	[BREAK]	
7:00 P.M.		Pre-concert discussion between UCMF Creative Director Leah Batstone and Dr. Peter J. Schmelz
7:30 P.M.	PART 6	String Quartets with The Rhythm Method

Valentyn Sylvestrov's works will include *Naïve Music* (1954–55, revised 1993); *Five Pieces* (1961); *Quartetto Piccolo* (1961); *String Quartet No. 1* (1974); *Misterioso* (1996); *Der Bote* (1996); *Elegie* for Cello and Tam-Tam (1999); *Three Bagatelles* (2005); *String Quartet No. 3* (2011); *Sonata of Curse* (2024); and more.

The program will also include works by **Arvo Pärt**, Anton Webern, Mykola Lysenko, Ihor Shamo, George Rochberg, Victoria Polevá, Philip Glass, and Missy Mazzoli.

All programs subject to change.

About the Festival

Ukrainian Contemporary Music Festival (UCMF)

Founded in 2020, the **Ukrainian Contemporary Music Festival (UCMF)** is dedicated to showcasing Ukraine's complex and diverse contributions to contemporary music through performances, educational opportunities, and community engagement with composers, scholars, and performers. UCMF is one of its kind in North America, actively engaging the intersection of new music, current events, and Ukrainian culture.

UCMF is a platform for all Ukrainian music, which continues to be overlooked in Western concert programming due to legacies of cultural erasure and appropriation. According to The New York Times, "the festival's very existence has always been a rejection of President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia's assertion that there is no real Ukrainian culture." UCMF is a leader in programming New York City's arts and cultural landscape. Past festivals have explored themes of music and revolution, Ukrainian independence, concepts of nature and "Landscape," pedagogy and influence, and border crossings.

In addition to its annual spring festival, UCMF frequently acts as a point of contact between the Ukrainian community and New York City's broader cultural sphere. UCMF served as liaison for the Ukrainian Chorus Dumka of New York's appearance on *Saturday Night Live* in 2022 and co-presented the sold-out Carnegie Hall concert "Notes from Ukraine: 100 Years of 'Carol of the Bells'" with Razom for Ukraine and the Ukrainian Institute in Kyiv, which celebrated the centennial of the first Ukrainian cultural diplomacy mission.

UCMF is committed to music education. The annual Festival includes a roundtable discussion that addresses the broader significance of Ukrainian music. It has also launched a database of Ukrainian composers on its website and uses its social media channels to host educational campaigns about the life and works of numerous Ukrainian composers. UCMF was founded by Dr. Leah Batstone, who serves as its current Creative Director. For more information, please visit ucmfnyc.com.

About the Artists

Valentyn Sylvestrov



Valentyn Vasylovych Sylvestrov (b. 1937 in Kyiv) is the leading figure of his generation of Ukrainian composers. Over the past decades he has also established himself as one of the most notable composers worldwide. Over the course of his career, Sylvestrov has developed a distinctive language that recalls the moods and melodies of the 19th century, but also pushes this familiar language in new and unfamiliar pathways, heard through the prism of his avant-garde experimentations of the 1960s. Sylvestrov first came to international attention in that decade with a series of ambitious, unruly, large scale orchestral works, one of which, his Symphony no. 3, "Eschatophony," received a prestigious Koussevitzky Prize. Subsequently, because of political pressures and personal inclinations, Sylvestrov began writing what he called "quiet music," music that withdrew to the intimacies of poetry, voice, and piano: "It is like the poems sing the melody themselves, but also as if the melody births the poems from itself." Sylvestrov built on this aesthetic of time and space by pivoting through other related styles, including what he called "kitsch," the postlude, and his overarching "metaphorical style." Sylvestrov's music therefore has a strong conceptual component that does not override but instead supplements the highly accessible language that he has cultivated over the course of his career. Since the Euromaidan protests of 2013–14 in Kyiv, he has become increasingly engaged in the sociopolitics of Ukraine, and has articulated a forceful, distinctly Ukrainian, patriotism and a poignant spirituality, most notably in his choral cycle *Maidan-2014*. But these concerns also reverberate throughout his almost daily compositions, many of which are posted on his YouTube channel or available on Bandcamp. These pieces continue his idea of the bagatelle, a genre that Sylvestrov has devoted himself to since the turn of the century, a seemingly unending sequence of works distinguished by his concentrated balance of sentimentality and reserve.

silvestrov.bandcamp.com ↗

Talea Ensemble

Heralded as “a crucial part of the New York cultural ecosphere” by The New York Times, the **Talea Ensemble’s** mission is to champion musical creativity, cultivate curious listeners, and bring visionary new works to life with vibrant performances that remain in the audience’s imagination long after a concert.

Recipient of the Chamber Music America/ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming, Talea has brought to life at least 80 commissions of major new works since it was founded in 2008, including bold and inventive productions combining music and other genres such as theater and visual art. Highlights from Talea’s recent performance seasons include world premieres by Katherine Balch, Suzanne Farrin, Steven Takasugi, Tyshawn Sorey, Sarah Hennies, Eric Chasalow, Natacha Diels, Anthony Cheung, Evis Sammoutis, Sanae Ishida and more, as well as numerous US and New York premieres.

Talea assumes an ongoing role in supporting a new generation of composers, and has undertaken residencies in music departments around the country. Since 2020, Talea has targeted support to early career composers through our Early Career Commissioning Program–which has awarded three commissions to date and introduced many newer voices to the ensemble’s programming–and our free week-long Recording Workshop, which offers participating composers professional recordings of recent works.

www.taleaensemble.org ↗

The Rhythm Method

Praised as “fierce, fearless, and virtuosic… unapologetically stylistically omnivorous and versatile” (New Music Box) and “trailblazing…skillful composer-performers” (The New Yorker), **The Rhythm Method** strives to reimagine the string quartet in a contemporary, feminist context. The four performer-composers of The Rhythm Method continually expand their sonic and expressive palette through the use of improvisation, vocalization, graphic notation, songwriting, and theater.

The Rhythm Method’s ongoing activities include the Hidden Mothers Project, a programming initiative that highlights works by historical women composers, and Broad Statements, an annual mini-festival celebrating creative music-making by women, non-binary, and gender-expansive people in a wide array of artistic styles.

The Rhythm Method is: Marina Kifferstein, Leah Asher, Carrie Frey, and Meaghan Burke.

View press kit: therhythmmethod.nyc/epk ↗

Ukrainian Music Initiative

Ukrainian Music Initiative (UMI) is a collaboration of four independent artists — contralto Vira Slywotzky, cellist Valeriya Sholokhova, pianists Margarita Rovenskaya and Pavlo Gintov — each of whom have a longstanding history of commitment to Ukrainian music. UMI's goal is to elevate Ukrainian classical music to its rightful place in the Western canon and to fill a significant gap in the American cultural landscape, that of skilled and knowledgeable musicians of Ukrainian heritage performing the breadth of Ukrainian classical music.

Learn more: ukrainianmusicinitiative.org ↗

Peter J. Schmelz

Peter J. Schmelz, PhD, is a Professor at Johns Hopkins University, specializing in twentieth and twenty-first century music. His books include *Such Freedom, If Only Musical: Unofficial Soviet Music during the Thaw* (Oxford, 2009); *Alfred Schnittke's Concerto Grosso no. 1* (Oxford, 2019); and *Sonic Overload: Alfred Schnittke, Valentin Silvestrov, and Polystylism in the Late USSR* (Oxford, 2021). He is currently working on a number of projects, including a book of essays on Valentyn Sylvestrov, a book on late Soviet experimental music, and a decolonial history of Soviet music (with Nana Sharikadze and Maia Sigua). He authored *The New York Times* profile of Sylvestrov following the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Read more: nytimes.com ↗

Partners

UCMF 2027

UCMF 2027 is co-presented by the **Ukrainian Institute** in Kyiv, UCMF's partner since its inception. The Festival is generously supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, and the Self Reliance Financial Federal Credit Union. It is grateful for the support of community partners including New York University (NYU), Montclair State University, and the Shevchenko Scientific Society.

Ukrainian Institute in Kyiv

The **Ukrainian Institute** is focused on improving the understanding and perception of Ukraine throughout the world and developing its cultural ties with other countries. Established by the Government of Ukraine in 2018, the Institute operates under the administration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Its creation followed a period of historic challenges, including the Revolution of Dignity and external threats, and represents a strategic effort to strengthen Ukraine's international presence. The Institute implements systemic cultural diplomacy through research, educational programs, public communication, and international collaboration.

ui.org.ua/en ↗

Ukrainian Classical Music Foundation

The **Ukrainian Classical Music Foundation** is a non-governmental organization based in Ukraine dedicated to preserving, developing, and promoting Ukrainian classical music. It brings together publishing, recording, concert, educational, and research initiatives, supports musicians, and builds partnerships in Ukraine and internationally.

Learn more: instagram.com/ucmfoundation ↗

VENUES & TICKETS

Festival concerts will take place at the fully accessible DiMenna Center for Classical Music (450 W. 37th Street, New York, NY) and St. Bartholomew Hall, located inside the Church of St. Luke & St. Matthew (520 Clinton Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11238). **Tickets** start at $35 and pay-what-you-can tickets are available for students and military veterans with valid ID. For tickets and full festival information, visit ucmfnyc.com.

For a preview of the season, listen to the UCMF 2027 Composer Playlist on Spotify.

FOR PRESS INTERVIEWS, TICKETS, AND REQUESTS, PLEASE CONTACT

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This press release is distributed by the Ukrainian Contemporary Music Festival, a 501(c)3 non-profit charity, dedicated to promoting contemporary Ukrainian culture.

"The Ukrainian Contemporary Music Festival's very existence has always been a rejection of President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia's assertion that there is no real Ukrainian culture."

— THE NEW YORK TIMES

Explore UCMF Online

UCMFNYC.COM

96	255	185	22	160	8
Composers in the database	Works documented	Works performed at UCMF	World & U.S. premieres	Performers & speakers	Festival editions, 2020–2027



CHECK THE

Ukrainian Composer Database

Each year UCMF expands its English-language database of Ukrainian composers: every composer the festival has presented, with biographies, the works performed at UCMF and their programme notes, performers, ensembles and links to recordings.

96 composers · 160 performers · 19 ensembles

ucmfnyc.com/composers-database.html ↗



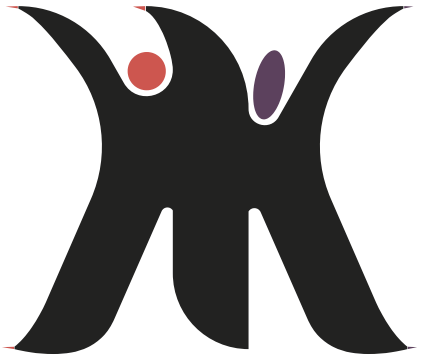
FIND

Scores & Further Information

If you are looking for a score of a work performed at one of our festivals, please contact us. The Resources page gathers online libraries of scores, essays and platforms on Ukrainian music, from the Ukrainian Scores Project to the World Library of Ukrainian Art Songs, each with a short annotation.

14 curated links · scores · articles

ucmfnyc.com/resources.html ↗



WATCH

Lectures & Talks

Scholarly presentations, roundtable talks and panels recorded at UCMF — a companion to the works archive, with lecturer biographies and links to the recordings: from Peter Schmelz's meditations on Sylvestrov to talks on Roslavets, the national canon and the education of Ukraine's composers.

10 recorded lectures, panels & talks

ucmfnyc.com/lectures.html ↗