

EXHIBITION GRAND OPENING · JUNE 12, 2009

CAPE BRETON UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY, SYDNEY, NOVA SCOTIA

The official opening of 'A Cape Breton Story of Ukrainian Dance: From Village to Stage' at the Cape Breton University Art Gallery in Sydney, Nova Scotia was marked by a festive air of celebration, as community members of all ages gathered to view a varied collection of treasured artifacts devoted to their own local history.

The arrival of Pavlo Romanovich Yavorsky ~ my father ~ to Whitney Pier in 1939 fed a fervour for Ukrainian dance and culture that the Cape Breton community has sustained to this day. I was very fortunate to attend the opening ~ and shared these impressions with those present:

"First, I have to say that visiting this community where my father came as a young man is an extraordinary experience for me. Mention has been made, in this exhibition, about his kindness to others, but it is certain that he himself experienced much kindness from the people of the parish and the wider community in Cape Breton, whose warmth and hospitality are legendary. I am grateful to the people ~ many who have since passed on ~ who delighted my father with their enthusiasm for his teaching and who shared with him the great gift of friendship.

Today I'd like to express my appreciation to those involved in including my father's history in this exhibition: most especially its curator, **Dr. Marcia Ostashewski**, for her sensitivity and her spark; as well as **Jane Arnold**, archivist at the Beaton Institute, for her devotion to the project; **Michele MacDonald**, director of the art gallery, for her expertise in mounting the exhibit; and **Dr. Andriy Nahachewsky**, at the University of Alberta, for his work on the panel structures.

I'd also like to acknowledge **Dr. Rod Nicholls**, Dean of Arts and Community Studies at Cape Breton University, and to sincerely thank Research Chair **Dr. Richard MacKinnon** and **Marie MacSween** for requesting that my father's biography be made available on-site. Many thanks, as well, to **John Huk** for recording my father's contribution to the history of Ukrainians in Cape Breton in his book, 'Strangers in the Land'.

It is 70 years since my father arrived in Whitney Pier ~ and more than ten years since his passing. He would be thrilled to witness this celebration of Ukrainian dance and culture. Congratulations to everyone who has performed a role, with passion and commitment equal to his own, in keeping these precious traditions alive."

The event included a blessing by Reverend Roman Dusanowskyj of Holy Ghost Ukrainian Catholic Church, with reading by Stella Huk, choir participation by Reverend Greg Andrusyshyn, Anna [...], Rose Best, Kaye Dilney, Leslie Donovan and Dr. Marcia Ostashewski, followed by musical entertainment by accordionist Steve Hasiuk.

The exhibition continues through August 14, 2009.



The exhibition was curated by **Dr. Marcia Ostashewski**, Visiting Research Fellow at the Centre for Cape Breton Studies at Cape Breton University (and Post-Doctoral Research Fellow in Interactive Media and Performance at University of Regina). Its creation also owes much to Archivist **Jane Arnold** and her colleagues at the Beaton Institute and to **Michele MacDonald**, Director of Cape Breton University Art Gallery. Many of the exhibit items are on loan from the private collections of dancers and instructors, as well as the Beaton Institute's Archives.

ARCHIVIST Jane Arnold



ART GALLERY DIRECTOR Michele MacDonald



RESEARCH CHAIR Dr. Richard MacKinnon



CURATOR Dr. Marcia Ostashewski