THE KOBZA
Songs and Tunes played on the Kobza and sung in Ukrainian by Paul Konoplenko-Zaporozetz
A Cossack Was Leaving for War
The Black Cloud
(Shovchenko-Lyashko)
O, Betrothed Maiden
Oh My Mother Told Me
(Arvanovsky)
For Your Cherry Lips
(Kupchinsky)
Ukrainian Folk Dances
Highlander's Kolomiyka
Carpathian Dance
Choornak
Doodlochka
Rayda (vocal with acc.)
(Khotkevitch)
O, Green Oak Tree
(Hayvoronsky)
Our Ukraine (vocal with acc.)
(Potapenko)
Blow, Wind, Unto Ukraine
(Alexandri-Radynsky)
There Stands a Mountain
(Lyashko)
A Bundle of Jocund Folk Songs (vocal with acc.)
If I But the Magic Knew
Be Gone, Death!
John War Sowing Millet

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THE KOBZA
Songs and Tunes
Played on the Kobza
and sung in Ukrainian
by Paul Konoplenco

1. A COSSACK WAS LEAVING FOR WAR
   Composer: N. Lyseiko, 1836-1912
2. THE BLACK CLOUD
   Poet: Taras Shevchenko, 1814-1861
   Composer: M. Lysenko, 1862-1928
3. O, BETROTHED MAIDEN
   Composer: S. H. Artemovskii, 1813-1873
4. OH MY MOTHER TOLD ME
   Composer: N. Lyseiko, 1836-1912
5. FOR YOUR CHERRY LIPS
   Music composed: R. Kupchinsky
6. UKRAINIAN FOLK DANCES
   a. Highlander's Kolomyka
   b. Carpathian Dance
   c. Choosak
   d. Doodechane

1. BAYDA, arranged: H. Khotskevitch
   Vocal with acc.
   1877-1950
2. O, GREEN OAK TREE
   Composed: M. O. Hayyovskii
   Vocal with acc.
3. OUR UKRAINE
   Composed: Kobzar D. Potapenko
   Vocal with acc.
   1865-1893
4. BLOW, WIND, UNTIL UKRAINE
   Composed: W. Alexandriw
   1865-1893
   Poet: Stephan Rudansky
5. THERE STANDS A MOUNTAIN
   Composed: N. Lyseiko
   Vocal with acc.
   a. If I But The Magic Knew
   b. Be Gone, Death!
   c. John Was Sowing Millet

THE KOBZA BALLADS, LYRICS AND FOLKSONGS
IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORY.

For centuries various conquering tribes and barbarians,
with fire and sword have plundered Ukraine, and have
enlarged its inhabitants; that is they changed the
peace loving nation into slaves, and took many of them
into captivity. For this reason the Ukrainian people
had to sacrifice much blood in defence of freedom and
the democratic principles.

In this unequal struggle there were not only times of
grief and sadness, but there were also moments of joy
and gladness. Throughout the centuries, the nation
has created its songs ballads and lyrics which charac-
terized its experiences. In the past centuries educa-
tional research workers, poets, and composers have
contributed greatly to the great inheritance of the
cultural arts. Their successors are continuing with
this great enterprise. In this theme there are many
volumes of literature. Also, there is an educational
book in Canada about "The Kobza, Bandura and Kobzar's
Art", by Kobzar Paul Konoplenco.

In the dances and in the songs, one can identify in
their content the spiritual life which has dominated
the Ukrainian nation throughout the centuries. These
songs, with their romantic mood, with their senti-
mental mood or with their gay mood, were sung from
the days of old with the accompaniment of the traditional
Ukrainian instrument, the Kobza, Ukraine's oldest
and most traditional of all its musical instruments.

THE KOBZA
The origin of the instrument is lost in the ages. The
Ukrainian Kobza as it is today is essentially the
creation of the Ukrainian people. It existed in
Ukraine in a primitive form as early as the eleventh
century A.D.

At the height of its popularity and development it be-
came the favorite instrument for entertainment, alone
and as an accompaniment for vocal song, and even for
dance music, in the courts of the nobility. It also
became the inseparable attribute of the Ukrainian
Cossack hosts both in peace and in their marches and
expeditions. It was the joy and consolation of the
masses both in times of prosperity and tribulation
through the centuries of stormy history of Ukraine.

It was never manufactured in quantity for sale, but
each kobza artist (kobzar) made his according to
common principles using his ingenuity and taste.
It was always chiselled out of a single block of
wood either willow or maple. Those made of horn
and glued together came in later centuries.

It settled to standards of eight, ten and later,
twelve strings spread on the fingerboard and the deck.

About the 16th Century, there appeared in Ukraine a
new type of instrument, the Bandura (Bahn-oo-rah)
which, because of more convenient shape, gradually
crowded out the kobza from the Ukrainian Cossack
hosts which was its mainstay.

Kobza is an instrument of the lute family, in its
early stages the shape, size and tonal structure
were chiselled out of a solid piece of willow tree
or a maple. Pannelling was introduced in its struc-
ture in later centuries.

It was made by interested individuals according to
their abilities after seeking expert advice and
guidance from the master craftsmen.

In later years apprenticeship of several years was
required to have instrument perfected for its
Chromatic melody.

Particulars regarding the history, past and present
of this instrument "kobza" and the other related
instruments can be obtained in a pamphlet from the
book store or upon purchasing of records from
the producer.

Paul Konoplenco-Zaporszets
Artist-Kobzar, Paul Konoplenco-Zaporszets was born
in Ukraine. He completed his musical academy on
violin from professor Karhulka, and school of music
on guitar in Odessa from Italian Spetsi.

In 1902, Mr. Konoplenco had the privilege of meeting
the only Kobzar with "kobza", Danylo Potapenko, the
last of the Zaporszetsian Kobzas, who presented Mr.
Konoplenco, with a "Kobza" which then was over one
hundred and fifty years old.

It was from Potapenko that Mr. Konoplenco acquired
the ability of playing the "Kobza" and during many
years, he mastered the technique of playing the
beautiful instrument, and at the same time im-
proved the "Kobza" itself.

In 1910, at the Musical Festival in Odessa, Mr.
Konoplenco achieved fame as a kobzar-virtuoso,
and was awarded a gold medal for his performance.

Before the First World War, Mr. Konoplenco put on
concerts for many cultural organizations and in
various operatic theatres in Ukraine, Crimea and
Caucasia.
Until the second World War, he periodically presented concerts in Europe. After the second World War, during a period of seven years he presented his famous concerts in Canada which were highly recognized by many cultural societies and authoritative musicians.

His concerts won such fame that, in Winnipeg as well as in other large Canadian cities, an organization known as "Friends of Koba" was formed and Mr. Konoplenko's concerts spread throughout Canada.

As a soloist, Mr. Konoplenko-Zaporozets plays his beloved "Kobza" for over fifty years in the style of "Punteado," definitely uses no pick.

By means of special technique in tonal vibrations he creates an impression of more than one instrument playing.

The kobza is a very well suited to various uses - solo with instrumental accompaniment, accompaniment to vocal parts, in the orchestra, classical, popular and dance music, and last but not least as an original solo instrument.

On the American continent, the kobza is an entirely new and strange instrument. As a perfect and unique contribution to the musical world it has no equal and may well be recommended for ever widening use and eventually, for mass production.

A valuable book about the kobza and its related instruments, written by the artist Konoplenko-Zaporozets, is about to be published. It is an authentic and interesting research about the kobza and its related instruments such as the lute, bandura, torban and guitar with historical data on their development, recession and renaissance. The book gives extensive documentary and illustrated historical material. One of the illustrations, a fresco from the St. Sophia Cathedral in Kiev, Ukraine, dated in the 11th Century, shows a type of kobza similar to the one used by Mr. Konoplenko. A useful chapter on the care and preservation of musical instruments is a valuable addition to this book.

News of the kobza and the "Kobzar" have spread far and wide. The many invitations from cultural and arts societies for concert tours include, besides Canada and the United States, England and other overseas countries.

Geographically set as an outpost blocking the gateway between Asia and Europe, Ukraine was bled and plundered through centuries in its struggle to preserve its liberty and democratic way of life against numerous plundering invasions which, at times, made deep inroads causing widespread disaster and ruin. She had no steadfast, dependable ally for her neighbors, also, took every opportunity to seize what they could for themselves. Ukraine has no natural boundaries that would hinder or discourage encroachment. In the 19th century, Ukraine, seriously weakened but not daunted, waged a long struggle for her liberty. At long last, her resistance became too weak to be successful. Ukraine was occupied and her people enslaved.

This tragic but heroic story of Ukraine was told and retold to the populace by the kobzars in their duems which they sang, playing the kobza for accompaniment, as they went about like the bards and minstrels of England. Shevchenko, also, was a victim of this enslavement and severe oppression for it was not until after his death in 1861 that the Czar of Russia proclaimed abolition of slavery. His lengthy poem recalls some of the old duems. He speaks of Ukraine as sad and worried over the gathering "black cloud" for her people are enslaved, the cossack hosts are dying and there's no one able to save her from this ill fate.

SIDE I, Band 3: "O, Betrothed Maiden"

On page 2, of Annotations for magnetic tape recording for Folkways, item #3. "O, Betrothed Maiden," (it is erroneously stated that the music was composed by K. Skorobich). It should read instead: O, Betrothed Maiden; an Old Folk song arranged for the kobza by Kobzar P. Konoplenko.

An engaged maiden explains that she walks about and because she could not put out of her mind the one she really loves. Teasingly, she is told that her thoughts are wandering and that she doesn't really know whom she loves. She declares that she knows full well which one she loves but doesn't know with whom she will have to live. In her thoughts she reassures herself that her charming face has not faded and that the one she loved, and hoped he would propose, wasn't worthy of her.

SIDE I, Band 4: "Oh My Mother Told Me"

A folk song written by composer S.H. Artemovsky, 1813-1873. The well often served as a convenient evening rendezvous for pairs in love. In this song the mother admonishes her daughter not to invite boys into the orchard-grove beside the house. However, one evening on her trip for water, love proves stronger than words. She forgets mother's admonition and chats with her handsome lover until late at night.

This jocund song was well known among Ukrainian village youth.

SIDE I, Band 5: "For Your Cherry Lips"

Music composed by R. Kupchinsky
Author and composer of popular songs.

A boy, charmed by the cherry-red lips of a beautiful girl, tells her that he would surrender to her all his possessions in return for her love.

SIDE I, Band 6: "Four Ukrainian Folk Dances"

A group of four old favorites from Ukraine:

A. Highlander's Kolomyeya
B. Carpathian Dance
C. Chopinak (proudly of men who travelled back and forth bringing salt and corn)
D. Doodochka (doodochka: means pipe or reed)
SIDE II, Band 3: Our Ukraine

Vocal with accompaniment.

The DSMA "Our Ukraine" is given in the original of Kostya D. Potapenko. The music of all the other items has been adapted (arranged) for the KOBZA by Kostya Paul Kolenko.

Historical background to the brief annotation accompanying the translation sent as a sample.

Through deliberate falsehoods and treachery the Tsar of Moscow seized control of Ukraine. To regain complete independence and liberty Hetman (chosen ruler) Ivan Mazepa joined forces with King Karl XII of Sweden against Tsar Peter I of Russia in 1709 A.D. The attack failed and the Tsar's hold tightened until the enslavement of Ukraine became complete.

This duma, sung by the kobzar (bard with the kobza) of Ukraine in the latter part of the 18th century, told the tragic story.


Duma - a historical ballad of the 18th Century. One of those
Mr. Kolenko learned from his
teacher and kobza-artist, D. Potapenko.

The old life of Ukraine
Has passed away,
Only epic and reminiscences,
And songs have remained.

These were born of the what steeple
And the steppe and the sea,
They curved forth from the heart,
From heavy grief.

The Cossacks' grief
Is contained in all songs,
It ironically cries
In happy songs and in the sad.

How could one sing happy songs
For you Ukraine,
When you never experienced
Even an hour of happiness.
You Ukraine, are all covered,
With their glory,
You are covered with grief, with tears,
And sprinkled with blood.

And as long as the sun shines,
Above the sinful world,
This epic, this song,
Will never be forgotten.

SIDE II, Band 4: Blow Wind, Unto Ukraine

Music composed by W. Alexandriw (1825-1893) writer, translator and music composer.
Verse composed by Stephen Rudzawsky (1825-1873) poet, satirist, author of popular lyric songs.

A folk song of a youth, living in another country far from Ukraine where he left his sweetheart, who requests the wind to find her and see if she shows signs that she is steadfast in her love for him. Then the wind is to return with the good news at midnight, but if she loves another the wind should scatter over the wide steppes of Ukraine and not return to him with the bad news.

Text
Blow Wind to Ukraine
Blow Wind to Ukraine,
Where I left my girl,
Where I left my brown eyes,
Blow wind at midnight.

Between the hills there is a valley,
In that valley there is a house,
In that house there is a girl,
Oh, my loved one.

Blow wind softly, softly,
Upon her white face,
And over that face bend low,
And take a look if she is sleeping.

If her heart talks,
If she sighs sadly,
And her dark eyes start to weep,
Return again wind, at midnight.

But if she has forgotten me,
And loves another,
Then disappear over the valley,
And do not return from Ukraine.

The wind blows, the wind blows,
The heart fades, the heart faints,
The wind blows, does not return,
The heart from sorrow is dying.

Theme
This is one Kozak in love with a girl in Ukraine. He was in another country and he asked the wind to bring news whether his girl still loved him. If she did not love him, he tells the wind to blow all over Ukraine and not return to him.

SIDE II, Band 5: There Stands a Mountain

Music composed by M. Lysenko

This folk song compares the passing beauty of summer, which returns with the warm spring sun, to the fleeting years of youth that never return.

At the foot of the high mountain spreads the green forest like the Garden of Eden. Along the edge of this forest winds a stream whose glistening waters flow through the green valley and are lost in the great beyond. Although this beautiful grandeur will be lost with the advance of autumn and winter, it will return with the arrival of the warm sun in spring. But our fleeting days of youth, like the glistening waters, will never return.

SIDE II, Band 6: A Bundle of Jocund Folk Songs
(Vocal and Accompaniment)

Song, with accompaniment on the kobza, by P. Konopelko.
a. If I But The Magic Knew
b. Be Gone, Death!
c. John Was Sowing Millet

(about a husband trying to be agreeable with his contrary wife)

Translations and annotations supplied to Folkways as a sample.

6a. If I But The Magic Knew, I'd do away with winter and it would always be summer. Instead of snowflakes we'd have drifts of sugar; in the clouds would be a hole from whiskey would drip into one's mouth; and sausages would grow on willows.

6b. Death came to take the widow but she says she has no time to die for she's busy entertaining with her neighbors.

6c. This husband's wife is so stubborn and contrary that she insists the fish he caught is a lobster. For the sake of peace, he says, "Let Thine will be done, let the fish be lobster." She was always fast to take a contrary stand and be readily given in.

Котько таку вовку,
Ми сьогодні підійшли,
Добре було б змінити сміття,
Чудно собе, жа, в житті.

Не було б сміття гіршого,
Залити ним ворожий!

Котько ріжка по хвоста,
До якої ти в житті.

В шершах було б таке життя,
Та тільки у руці тієї,
Я тоді б колю гуляв
I дівчаток цілував.

Жінка смерть притяглась смерті!
Ти до волов клою!
Годи велко веду гулмай,
Приїдьце поро помітіть!

Іди смерть іди просі!
Головонаки не мороч!

Ох не просі мене,
З сусідними гулмай!

Сьогодень просі,
Жінка козак моя!

Ох ти, чи не тяж.
Нехай буде з просі моя.

Жінка любе моя —
Нехай буде всю твою,
Нехай буде моя!
John Seeded Millet

John was seeding millet,
But his wife said, "poppy seeds!"

CHORUS:
Be it so, or be it no,
Let millet be poppy seeds,
Oh my loving wife
Let thine will be done,
Let it be poppy seeds!

John had caught a Jackfish!
But his wife says it's a lobster!

CHORUS:
Be it so, or be it not,
Let the Jackfish be a lobster!

John had bought a nanny goat!
But his wife insists it's a buck!

CHORUS:
Be it so, or be it not,
Let the nanny goat be a buck!

---

If I Knew Such Magic

If I knew such magic,
I'd cancel winter,
Everybody would feel well, throughout the world,
And they would always feel like in summertime.

There would be no snow or storms,
But only drifts of sugar,
On willows sausages would grow,
The kind we all do like.

In the cloud there would be a hole,
From which whiskey would pour into your mouth.
Then I would frolic round each day,
And kiss the maidens.

---

The Death Came or (£ Gone, Death)

O the death came, the death did come,
To the widow saying,
No more time to drink and dance
The time has come for you to die.

Go away death, be gone you menace!
Don't bother my head,
For I have no time,
I'm dancing with my neighbors.

---

Arranged for the Kobza
by Artist-Kobzar, Paul
Korneienko-Zaporozets.
(Ukrainian Vocal)

Popular humorous:
"If I Had the Charm of Magic",
"The Death Came" or ("Be Gone Death"),
"John Seeded Millet".

These three folk songs, ever increasing in popularity from the beginning of the 19th Century, were the three merry songs most often accompanied by the Kobza.