

The NAXOS logo is a blue square with the word "NAXOS" in white, serif, all-caps font. Above the text are three stylized white columns, and below it are three horizontal lines.

NAXOS

A large, detailed photograph of a dried floral arrangement. It features a variety of dried flowers, including clusters of small, round, orange-brown buds, long, thin, light-colored grasses, and larger, dried, light-colored flowers. The arrangement is set against a dark red background.

UKRAINIAN CHRISTMAS

Arranged by
Bohdan Kryvopust

Solomiya Ivakhiv, Violin
Lviv National Philharmonic
Symphony Orchestra
Serhii Khorovets

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- Traditional Ukrainian carols**
- 1 All around the world, good tidings (По всьому світу стала новина)
(Po vsiomu svitu stala novyna) 3:10
- 2 Good evening to you! (Добрий вечір тобі!) (Dobryi vechir tobi!) 2:45
- 3 How wondrous this is (Що то за предиво) (Shcho to za predyvo) 5:07
- 4 God is born (Бог ся рождає) (Boh sia rozhdaie) 3:27
- Vasyl Zhdankin (1958–2019)
- 5 On a sleigh, God was born (Народився Бог на санях)
(Narodyvsia Boh na saniakh) (1988) 4:13
- Traditional Ukrainian carols**
- 6 New joy has arisen (Нова радість стала) (Nova radist' stala) 4:37
- 7 Glory to God in the highest (Слава во вишніх Богу)
(Slava vo vyshnikh Bohu) 2:45
- 8 A peacock strolls (Павочка ходить) (Pavochka khodyt') 5:06
- 9 Malanka (Маланка) 3:28
- Bohdan Kryvopust (b. 1975)
- 10 Fantasia (Фантазія) (2023) 9:33
- Franz Xaver Gruber (1787–1863)
- 11 Silent night (Тиха ніч) (Tukha nich) (1818) 3:34
- Traditional Ukrainian carol**
- 12 Evening of plenty, evening of goodness (Щедрий вечір, добрий вечір)
(Shchedryi vechir, dobryi vechir) 4:59

Ukrainian Christmas

Arranged by Bohdan Kryvopust

Bohdan Kryvopust

Lauded Ukrainian composer Bohdan Kryvopust has had compositions performed by Ukrainian and international ensembles including Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine, Orkiestra Muzyki Nowej, Filharmonii Śląskiej and conducted by Antoni Wit, Kirill Karabits, Volodymyr Syvokhip and Volodymyr Sirenko. His compositions have been recorded for the Ukrainian National Music Treasure Fund, Naxos of America, aired on national broadcasts, and commissioned by the Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne (PWM) and the Music at the Institute (MATI) Concert Series in New York City. Born in Zaporizhzhia, Kryvopust graduated from the Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music in Kyiv with a doctorate in composition (under the tutelage of Hennadii Liashenko and Lev Kolodub), and degrees in piano (with Tetiana Roshchina). He was awarded the prestigious Levko Revutsky (2005), Boris Lyatoshynsky (2016), Mykola Lysenko (2016), Mykola Leontovych (2022) and Viktor Kosenko (2022) prizes from the Ukrainian government, and received a grant from the Polish Ministry of Culture. In 2021 he won First Prize in the Ukrainian Concert Overture competition in celebration of the 30th anniversary of Ukraine's renewed independence. He has served as head of the Music of the Youth international forum, and since 2010 has been the director of the state music publisher Muzychna Ukraina, where he has initiated several important publications.

Sounds of Ukrainian Christmas

Ukraine's holiday season is accompanied by an abundant, vibrant array of carols and carolling traditions. Its Christmas carols are sometimes solemn, sometimes full of awe and humility, sometimes joyful and boisterous. Its New Year's carols often express gratitude for the earth's bounty and, in turn, plentiful good will toward neighbours. Refrains to these carols echo this spirit of well-wishing: 'An evening of plenty, evening of goodness: to all good people, for all this evening.'

Many Ukrainian carols, including several in this recording, originated centuries ago. Some customs of carolling – with groups of singers walking door to door carrying a colourful eight-pointed star, called a *zvizda* – hearkens back to pre-Christian times. Originally, the *zvizda* symbolised the gradual return of light, the sun, with the winter solstice. In modern times, the *zvizda* came to symbolise the coming of spiritual light with the birth of the Messiah. There is quite a range of themes and images in traditional carols, but they are also united by a common thread. As a whole, the carols of the holiday season express an appreciation for both heaven and earth: the sun that warms and renews our planet, the rich land on which Ukrainians live, the Star in the East, and the coming of a saviour, the Prince of Peace, among humans.

Traditionally, the carols featured in this album are performed by choirs singing a cappella and, of course, with lyrics. The melodies, however, are beguiling in and of themselves. The soulful playing of Solomiya Ivakhiv, who grew up in Western Ukraine singing these songs, and the fanciful arrangements of Bohdan Kryvopust, born in Eastern Ukraine, retain the ethos and *predyvo* – magical quality – of these carol miniatures. At the same time, the artists spin the melodies into resplendent reveries with harmonies and orchestral timbres that span various musical styles and sound worlds. As these melodies are reimagined and played by Solomiya with the musicians of the Lviv National Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra, they travel across time and cultures and continually circle back to their beautiful, native land.



Produced during a time of Russia's ruthless war on Ukrainian soil, the melodies and music-making of these artists take on extra meaning. Ukrainians are a *spivuchy* nation – a singing people who will not be silenced. No matter what difficulty befalls them, they lift their voices in song, and their holiday carols always lift their spirits. No matter the gravity or suffering of the moment, Ukrainians look to the heavens and to their land for comfort, and at Christmastime they continue to wish a season of wonder and joy to 'all people of good will'.

Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and a peaceful, prosperous New Year!

Po vsiomu svitu stala novyna ('All around the world, good tidings') is a folk carol with origins in the Kyiv region of Ukraine. It expresses how the whole world rejoiced at the news of Christ's birth, and it has been arranged by several Ukrainian composers, most notably by Kyrylo Stetsenko (1882–1922).

Dobryi vechir tobi! ('Good evening to you!') is known throughout Ukraine and the diaspora as a vibrant carol of well-wishing. Carollers often sing it as they enter a new home in their travels, shaking snow off their jackets and boots. Its hearty melody and its refrain 'Rejoice, oh earth!' embody a spirit of celebration. Solomiya Ivakhiv's virtuosic variations on the theme magnify this earthy exuberance.

Shcho to za predyvo ('How wondrous this is') is an ancient folk carol of unknown provenance. Its lyrics describe the wonder of the Virgin Mary's birth of Christ and her own sense of awe at first seeing her son. This particular melody and its underlying harmonisation come from a choral arrangement written in the 1930s by Vasyl Barvinsky (1888–1963), a renowned pianist, composer, and music luminary in Lviv, Solomiya's home city.

Boh sia rozhdaie ('God is born'), also known by its earlier title *Boh sia razhdaye*, is a traditional carol popular in both Ukraine and Poland. Its fanciful refrain focuses on the reaction of the creatures who surrounded the manger at Christ's birth: 'Here angels gaze in awe, an ox stands trembling, a donkey solemnly grazes, shepherds kneel seeing God incarnate, here now, here now, here, here, here.'

Narodyvsia Boh na saniakh ('On a sleigh, God was born') is a relatively new carol, composed in the late 1980s by Vasyl Zhdankin to verses by Bohdan-Ihor Antonych (1909–1937), whose style of poetry might be characterised as one of folk-magical realism. The poem imagines that Christ was born in a mountain town, where the local carpenters built him a sleigh. As he is transported 'into the blue unknown', the sun wears a hat, and Mary holds the moon in her hands.

Nova radist' stala ('New joy has arisen') is among Ukraine's most revered and iconic carols, passed down by clerics and lay singers alike for centuries. The minor mode and mood of the carol may seem incongruous to the title, but Ukrainian holiday celebrations include a sentiment of awe and reverence. The 'joy' that humans feel at the coming of the Messiah on Christmas Eve is a 'new' one, unique.

The title *Slava vo vyshnikh Bohu* ('Glory to God in the highest') is familiar to audiences around the world. However, unlike most carols and liturgical hymns featuring the words 'Glory to God', this one describes not angels but focuses on the story that surrounds their singing. The fast scalic melody well suits the narrative of scurrying shepherds and the three kings making their way step-by-step to pay the Christ Child a visit.

Pavochka khodyt' ('A peacock strolls') is an ancient carol, and the melody with its unusual turns of phrase betrays its non-Western European roots. Likewise, the lyrics are unusual for the conventional Western holiday season: 'Pavochka khodyt', piriachko hubyt' ('A peacock strolls and loses her feathers'). However, the carol's refrain – 'Shchedryi vechir, dobrym liudiam' ('Evening of plenty, to good people') – connects it to traditional Ukrainian *shchedrivky*, or New Year's carols.

The title *Malanka* comes from the name of a winter holiday celebrated in Ukraine during the Christmas to New Year's season: the Christian feast day of St Melania the Younger. In some regions and among some families, the holiday falls on 31 December and in some it falls on 13 January, according to the Julian (Old Style) calendar. By either calendar, the various rituals that accompany Malanka have pagan origins, and its carols are quite lively and dance-like.

Bohdan Kryvopust's *Fantasia* is a montage of several holiday melodies of contrasting moods. The first melody is from the Christmas carol *V hlybokii dolyni stalasia novyna* ('In a deep valley, a marvel occurred'). His *Fantasia* then reprises the carol *Boh sia rozhdaie* heard in the fourth track of this album. The next melody is from the beloved Christmas lullaby *Spy, Isuse, spy* ('Sleep, Jesus, sleep') composed by Yosyp Kyshakevych (1872–1953), a priest and composer in Lviv. The melody that follows will 'ring a bell' and needs little introduction except for the clarification that its Ukrainian lyrics have nothing to do with bells. Originally called *Shchedryk* (not *Carol of the Bells*), it is a New Year's carol about gratitude and resilience. Its melody – a simple four-note motif that is common to many village carols – itself was spun and transformed by the composer Mykola Leontovych (1877–1921) into a miniature choral fantasy in the 1910s and is here transformed again.

Tykha nich ('*Silent night*') has its origins in Austria, where it was written by the poet Joseph Mohr (1792–1848) and composer Franz Xaver Gruber (1787–1863). Nevertheless, it is popular in many countries internationally, including Ukraine. In triple metre, the carol is often sung and played in a meditative 'all is calm' manner. Kryvopust's arrangement for this recording reimagines the carol as a lilting waltz where 'all is' free and easy, without care.

The New Year's carol *Shchedryi vechir, dobryi vechir* ('*Evening of plenty, evening of goodness*') is Solomiya and Bohdan's fond farewell to all who might be listening to their album – to all hearts 'po vsiomu svitu' around the world. Its sentiment is both timely and timeless:

Bright stars have covered the sky
And have illumined our world.
Refrain: Evening of plenty, evening of goodness
to all good people good health.

May there be in the New Year
Peace and good fortune in your home.
Refrain: Evening of plenty, evening of goodness
to all good people good health.

Verses from Evening of plenty, evening of goodness

English translation by M. Kuzma.

The carol is also known under the title Bright stars have covered the sky (Небо ясні зорі вкрили) (Nebo yasni zori vkryly).

Marika Kuzma

Marika Kuzma is a Ukrainian-American choral director of international stature and a music historian known particularly for her scholarship in Ukrainian repertoire. Her recording of Bortniansky's choral concertos *I cried out to the Lord* (Naxos 8.573109) has met with critical acclaim, and her forthcoming volume on Christmas music is titled *Carols of Birds, Bells, and Sacred Hymns from Ukraine: An Anthology and Cultural Companion* with a recording in progress to complement the book. She is a professor emerita of the University of California, Berkeley, where she led several choirs, and she has been a chorus master to Gustavo Dudamel, Nicholas McGegan, Mark Morris Dance Group, Kent Nagano and Keri-Lynn Wilson, among others, in works from various centuries and cultures.

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Lviv National Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra



Photo: Yanan Li

The Myroslav Skoryk Lviv National Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra is one of the largest and oldest Ukrainian orchestras, with its 121-year history preserving the finest traditions of European music-making as well as representing the brand of the Lviv National Philharmonic throughout the world. The orchestra has been conducted by Richard Strauss, Gustav Mahler, Ruggero Leoncavallo, Mieczysław Karłowicz, Lorenzo Perosi, Reinhold Glière, Yevgeny Mravinsky, Nicolae Popescu and Kurt Masur, among others. Soloists have included Maurice Ravel, Béla Bartók, Karol Szymanowski, Arthur Rubinstein, Ferruccio Busoni, Wanda Landowska, Leopold Godowsky, Yakov Milstein, Eugène Ysaÿe, Pablo Casals, and many other prominent figures. The orchestra regularly appears at festivals in Ukraine and abroad, and tours internationally. From January to March 2023, the orchestra conducted a large-scale tour of the United States, during which it visited 20 states and gave 40 concerts, including a sell-out performance at Carnegie Hall in New York. In December 2023, the orchestra appeared at the Philharmonie Berlin to great acclaim. In recent seasons, the orchestra has made several important recordings for major labels, including Naxos and Brilliant Classics.

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Serhii Khorovets



Serhii Khorovets graduated from the Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music in Kyiv in 2008 as a student of Allin Vlasenko. Shortly thereafter, in 2014, he received artistic training at the Chopin University of Music in Warsaw with Marek Pijarowski. From 2011 to 2013 he served as chief conductor of the Academic Chamber Orchestra of Rivne Regional Philharmonic, and worked with the orchestras of Dnipro, Zaporizhzhia, Kherson, Crimea, Odesa, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Białystok and Žilina. Khorovets has collaborated with soloists including Konstanty Andrzej Kulka, Oleh Krysa, Olha and Natalya Pasichnyk, József Örményi and Vadym Neselovskyi. Since 2012, he has also performed as a bayan player in a duo with his wife, Ukrainian violinist Lidia Futorska, popularising Ukrainian classical music in Poland, Austria, Germany, Spain, Qatar, Italy and Cyprus. Khorovets has served as the conductor of the Lviv National Philharmonic Academic Symphony Orchestra since 2019.

Solomiya Ivakhiv



Photo: Yevgeny Popov

Ukrainian-born violinist Solomiya Ivakhiv is a highly celebrated soloist, chamber musician and educator. She has made solo appearances with the Istanbul State Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine, Charleston Symphony and Hunan Symphony Orchestra, and performed at chamber music festivals worldwide. Her recordings have been featured on NPR's Performance Today, and have placed in the top charts on iTunes and Spotify. Dr Ivakhiv serves as artistic director of music at the Music at the Institute (MATI) Concert Series in New York City and Caspian Music Festival in Greensboro, Vermont. She holds degrees from the Curtis Institute of Music, having studied with Joseph Silverstein, Pamela Frank and Rafael Druian, and a Doctorate from Stony Brook University with Philip Setzer, Ani Kavafian and Gilbert Kalish. She has been concertmaster of the Curtis and Tanglewood Center Symphony Orchestras. Dr Ivakhiv is professor of violin and viola and head of strings at the University of Connecticut, and professor of violin at Longy School of Music. In 2021, she was named Honoured (Merited) Artist of Ukraine, the country's highest cultural honour.

www.solomiyaivakhiv.com

Ukraine has a long and vibrant tradition of Christmas carols, whose melodies and meaning – now, more than ever – hold an important place in the hearts of the country’s people. Some carols date back centuries and cover a wide variety of themes, but they are united by a common thread – an appreciation of the beauties of heaven and earth, and the coming of the Saviour. The Ukrainian violin virtuoso Solomiya Ivakhiv is the soloist in Bohdan Kryvopust’s imaginative arrangements, which bring out the variety and beauty of the carols. Kryvopust’s own *Fantasia* is a delightful festive montage.

UKRAINIAN CHRISTMAS

Traditional Ukrainian carols		8	A peacock strolls	5:06	
1	All around the world, good tidings	3:10	9	Malanka	3:28
2	Good evening to you!	2:45	Bohdan Kryvopust (b. 1975)		
3	How wondrous this is	5:07	10	Fantasia (2023)	9:33
4	God is born	3:27	Vasyl Zhdankin (1958–2019)		
Vasyl Zhdankin (1958–2019)		Franz Xaver Gruber (1787–1863)			
5	On a sleigh, God was born (1988)	4:13	11	Silent night (1818)	3:34
Traditional Ukrainian carols		Traditional Ukrainian carol			
6	New joy has arisen	4:37	12	Evening of plenty, evening of goodness	4:59
7	Glory to God in the highest	2:45			

All works arranged by Bohdan Kryvopust (2023–24)

WORLD PREMIERE RECORDINGS

Solomiya Ivakhiv, Violin

Lviv National Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra

Serhii Khorovets

A detailed track list can be found inside the booklet

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