



# *The Heart of Oksana*

*by Stefania Turkewich (1898-1977)*

**a US-Premiere Reading and Doctoral Lecture Recital  
Conducted by Erica Glenn**

*in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Choral Conducting*

**ASU Organ Hall  
Tues, November 23, 2019  
7:30 PM**

*For cast/team bios and additional program notes, please visit:*

[www.ericakyreeglenn.com/oksana](http://www.ericakyreeglenn.com/oksana)

## Cast and Crew

**Oksana:** Melanie Holm  
**Tsar Okh:** Stephanie Sadownik  
**Vlodko:** Taryn Cantrell  
**Roman:** Emily Benoit Smith  
**Mother:** Samantha Davalos  
**Sun:** Haley McHardy  
**Moon:** Jill Khaleghi  
**Wind:** Tanya Landau

**Female Chorus:** Catherine Baldwin, Maggie Berry, Evening Calabrese, Dhanya Chandrasekharan, Zoe Cummard, Mary DeWitt, Brooke Durborow, Jill Khaleghi, Alyssa Marks, Taryn Landis, Julia Legler, Eliana O'Brien, Sofya Pangburn, Sarah Shipley, Kiernan Steiner, Amanda Stone

**Dancers:** Maggie Berry, Shery Chang, Tarryn Gould, Alexis Jackson, Taryn Landis, Jazmin Parker, Amy Symonds, Natasha Villegas

### Orchestra:

**Flute:** Katelyn McClain  
**Violin I / Concertmaster:** Izayah Dutcher  
**Violin II:** Jamie Wu  
**Viola:** Courtney Ferry  
**Cello:** Cameryn Baum  
**Bass:** Karl Kessler  
**Piano:** Aida Olarte

**Director, Conductor:** Erica Glenn  
**Choreographer:** Mikaela Wisniewski  
**Assistant Choreographer:** Maddy Cafaro  
**Chorus Master:** Kiernan Steiner  
**Assistant Chorus Master:** Eliana O'Brien  
**Dialect Coach:** Erica Glenn  
**Transcription Work:** Jarron Carlson  
**Translation / Transliteration:** Erica Glenn  
**Translation Assistant:** Maria Lukianowicz  
**Layout Assistant:** Lindsey Murphy

**Special thanks** to Doctoral Thesis Committee members Dr. David Schildkret (chair), Dr. Kay Norton, and Brian DeMaris. Additional thanks to Anya Bigun Beus, Anna Bigun, David Brokaw, Patrick Driscoll, Rick Florence, Devin Glenn, James Glenn, Sharlee Glenn, Hilde Hoogenboom, Pavlo and Larysa Hunka, the ASU Melikian Center, and the ASU School of Music.

**ACT I: Evening.** In a Hutsul cottage, deep in the mountain regions of Western Ukraine, Mother serenades her baby with a lullaby about Father, who is off in battle, defending the Ukrainian border. When she exits to gather strawberries from the garden, her oldest three children, Oksana (age 8), Vlodko (age 9), and Roman (age 11), begin to tease one another. Roman believes he is the wisest. Vlodko believes he is the most talented. Oksana expresses a desire to learn how to dance, but the boys cut her short and belittle her, claiming that their talents are superior. Mother returns and sends the boys into the forest to deliver strawberries to their grandfather. Oksana asks to accompany them, but Mother makes her stay behind. Disappointed and frustrated, Oksana begins fiddling with her brothers' toys and reading their books—including a Ukrainian folktale about the terrifying Tsar Okh who rules a vast forest kingdom and a comic story about a battle between beetles and mosquitoes. Oksana drifts off to sleep while reading, and as she does, the creatures in the story come to life around her. She rises and exits the house in search of her brothers.

**ACT II: Nighttime.** Roman and Vlodko have lost their way in the forest and are becoming increasingly frightened by the noises and shadows. They bicker with each other and cry out, "Oh, oh, oh," inadvertently summoning Tsar Okh, who decides to teach them a lesson for invoking his name carelessly and not thinking before they speak. To capture the boys, he gives them boots and a hat that are enchanted with a spell. His servant lures the boys away to Okh's kingdom in the clouds despite the efforts of the Wind, who tries to prevent the kidnapping. A few moments later, Oksana enters the forest, anxious to find her brothers. She offers the Wind her red shoes (so Wind can move about more easily) in exchange for assistance, but the Wind doesn't know where the boys were taken. As the Wind exits and Oksana weeps silently, the Stars appear. She offers the Stars ribbons from her hair, and they guide her through the forest. As Oksana ascends towards Okh's kingdom, she begs the Moon to show her the way in exchange for a lock of hair to keep the Moon warm. The Moon accepts the braid of hair but is bound to preserve its secrets. The Stars disappear and the Moon sleeps; Oksana is left completely alone. In desperation, she cries out to the Sun, who appears in a blaze of glory. Oksana has nothing left to give but her heart, which the Sun accepts. The Sun leads her away towards King Okh.

**ACT III: Early Morning.** The servants, courtiers, and forest creatures of Tsar Okh's kingdom perform a stately dance before his throne. Okh gathers his subjects and explains that the Sun seems to be missing (along with all light and happiness). To everyone's joy, the Sun suddenly appears with Oksana. The Sun pleads Oksana's case before King Okh, and he agrees to release Roman and Vlodko in exchange for Oksana's heart. A servant returns the boys and removes their gags. The brothers immediately begin singing and dancing recklessly. They finally notice Oksana, but because she has sacrificed her heart, she can no longer feel anything, and she rejects them coldly. Tsar Okh agrees to return Oksana's heart to her distraught brothers if they can answer two riddles (anagrams for "Ukraine" and "Tsar Okh"). The boys solve both riddles, and Okh hands them Oksana's heart, which they immediately return to her. She revives, and the siblings embrace. Tsar Okh is quick to explain, however, that there is a catch: In exchange for her heart and her brothers' freedom, Oksana must now remain with Tsar Okh forever. The boys throw themselves at Okh's feet and offer themselves as captives in place of their sister. The Sun witnesses this noble gesture and appears again to break Okh's spell and release all three children. She guides them home where they embrace their mother and each other as the whole forest rejoices.

## Note from the Conductor

It is no secret that the Soviet Union silenced the voices of many artists, but pieces of this history are still emerging—including the story of Ukraine's first female composer to achieve professional renown: Stefania Turkewich (1898-1977). I first stumbled on Turkewich's name as I was researching a Russian female composer, Ella Adaevskaia.

Turkewich immediately captured my attention—this woman who studied with compositional giants like Arnold Schoenberg and Franz Shreker and who was the first woman in Galicia to receive a PhD, with a boldly nationalistic dissertation entitled "Ukrainian Folklore in Russian Operas." The quantity and quality of Turkewich's compositional output—dozens of choral works in the Ukrainian Greek Catholic tradition, four operas, three symphonies, five ballets, numerous chamber works—should be more than enough to establish her as a major figure in Ukraine. Instead, many professional Ukrainian musicians have never even heard of her. Her large works remain unpublished, and English-language sources are scarce.

As political tensions rise across the globe, the eyes of the world seem to be locked on countries like Ukraine. Lost Soviet-era voices carry particular social and political weight as present-day Ukraine reclaims an identity that moves beyond reductive "Russian vs. European" dichotomies, and solidifying that identity feels even more urgent against the backdrop of the Donbass War. Eventually, I hope to draft a first-ever English-language biography of Turkewich's life, publish the scores I have transcribed, and actively champion Turkewich's music in the US and abroad through lectures and performances.

Tonight marks the beginning of this journey. Thank you for joining us to witness more than 30 singers, dancers, instrumentalists, and creative team members give new life to one of Turkewich's recently-rediscovered chamber operas for children, *Серце Оксани*.

*Please join us after the opera to mingle with the cast and enjoy a reception of traditional Ukrainian treats in the main lobby.*

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