



**2022 Tryzub Awards Gala
May 12, 2022 – Art Gallery of Ontario**

**Welcoming Remarks by Gordon Gordey, First Vice President
Ukrainian Canadian Foundation of Taras Shevchenko**

On behalf of the Shevchenko Foundation, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you this evening to the 2022 Tryzub Awards Gala.

I bring regrets from our Board President, Boris Balan, who is unable to join us because he is out of the country.

I begin by extending our immense gratitude to Rayla and George Myhal whose vision for a superlative gala evening in recognition of community leaders and friends of Ukraine has brought us together. In partnership with the Myhal Family Foundation we celebrate the second Tryzub Awards to honor individuals who make a difference to the Ukrainian brand both in our community and beyond. Thank you again, Rayla, for your positive energy, commitment, and leadership.

It was a difficult decision to go ahead with today's event understanding that our hearts, minds, and actions are with Ukraine and its people. However, tonight's honorees underscore the importance of the work of so many individuals in different fields and various professions to safeguarding global peace and security; work that today will help Ukraine succeed in defending the democratic principles that we in this room hold dear.

My congratulations to tonight's Tryzub Award recipients – Retired Lieutenant-General Paul Wynnyk and Dr. Timothy Snyder – to whom you will be introduced later this evening. We thank you for keeping the world engaged and instilling confidence in the Ukrainian people that they have not been left to fight alone.

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for your attendance this evening and for your generous financial support with which you are making a significant contribution to Canadian efforts in support of the Ukrainian people at this pivotal moment in history.

All of us tonight join our various levels of government, countless community organizations, families, and individuals who continue to stand with Ukraine. We stand with the Ukrainian people in their fight against the imperialist aggressor whose goal it is to annihilate the Ukrainian identity.

I share with you a source of personal inspiration from Ukrainian artist – Pavlo Makov from Kharkiv. Even in this war he has managed to showcase his art installation “Fountain of Exhaustion” at Venice Biennale this year – the world’s oldest and most important contemporary art fair. His art installation was driven by car from Kyiv, through Romania, on to Budapest and Vienna, and finally on to Venice.

In an interview Makov stated: “We cannot let democracy be exhausted. It is important to show the world that Ukrainian culture is real and unique – despite Russian claims to the contrary... In a nation without culture there is no identity, it doesn’t exist. Russia cannot be allowed to destroy Ukrainian culture...*into non-existence.*”

The Shevchenko Foundation shares his message and vows to never let this cultural destruction happen.

Many of the custodians of the Ukrainian creative community will find themselves displaced in our Canadian communities. Among them will be young aspiring musicians, dancers, artists, and creative culture makers.

This creative youth has the ability to share experiences and to: “...enrich the Canadian experience with the beauty, passion, and diversity of Ukrainian culture.”

I am pleased to announce that the proceeds from this event will be split evenly between the Canada Ukraine Foundation and the Shevchenko Foundation. Proceeds will be designated in full for humanitarian initiatives in response to the consequences of the unprovoked war being waged by Russia against Ukraine.

Tonight, I have the pleasure of announcing that the Shevchenko Foundation will use its portion of the funds raised through your generous donations to initiate the first phase of new programming to make cultural and educational opportunities more accessible for displaced Ukrainian youth in Canada.

Our three streams of programming will support displaced youth in recreational and community participation, and professional arts development.

One stream will provide special immediate grant funding to help organizations offset costs in welcoming displaced youth in Canada at summer camp programs or arts camps. We believe it is critical for young Ukrainians to feel the support and comfort of our community as they deal with the trauma they endure.

A second stream will provide special grant funding to help organizations offset costs for learning resources associated with welcoming newcomers into recreational Ukrainian Canadian heritage arts programs. Grants will assist with costs such as instrument rental, specialty footwear, rehearsal attire, and art supplies.

The third stream will provide scholarships for displaced youth wishing to continue to study visual, digital, or performing arts at a professional training level with individual coaches/teachers, or at professional arts schools.

Working with our community partners and donors we will be rolling out these programs as quickly as possible and ensuring a broad national outreach.

Ukraine's image in the world is now redefined by the bravery and newly sculpted image of what it is to be a Ukrainian.

We look to these young people that we will be supporting to embody Ukraine's eternal cultural identity and to be the creators of its bold future. We look to them to challenge all of us in the diaspora to embrace the birth of a new cultural expression of what it means to be inspired by our ancestral homeland - Ukraine.

Thank you again for your support. Thank you, Tryzub Award recipients for being our guideposts for knowledge and leadership. *Slava Ukraini!*