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## Virsky Ukrainian National Dance Company offers a graceful exploration of culture

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By DANIELLE M. GEORGIU / Special Contributor to The Dallas Morning News

Despite the ominous rain clouds gathering outside the Meyerson [Symphony](#) Center on Thursday night, the mood inside was as bright as the costumes on the Virsky Ukrainian National Dance Company.

The dancers welcomed the audience with open arms and an explosion of color in *Ukraine, My Ukraine!* The larger-than-life agility of the men was immediately on display, their deep pliés, acrobatics and sky-grazing cabrioles executed with seeming ease.

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Their boldness continued with *Povzunets*. Danced entirely in a deep grande plié position, the men executed gravity-defying inversions and cartwheels, and one soloist performed a magnificent sit-spin resembling a propeller. *Kyiv Fellows* was a humorous contest between groups of tall and short men, the tall contenders challenging with 180-degree toe touches, while the short group countered with giant hitch-kicks and floor-grazing barrel rolls. They hit their peak in *Moriaky* (Sailors), a fast-paced, joyous dance full of aerials, pirouettes and split leaps evoking ideas of endurance.

JASON JANIK/Special Contributor  
**The Virsky Ukrainian National Dance Company** provided colorful and inspiring insight at its Dallas performance Thursday.

The women added a lovely element of realism and femininity in *Kozachok* as they performed a series of graceful pirouettes and fouettés in unison. They continued to entice with the sexy *Gipsy Dance*, in which their bodies personified the sound of a tambourine.

In the socially conscious and humorous *Chumack Joy*, the experiences of four poor men were explored; they learned to appreciate the small tokens in life, such as a new pair of shoes.

Any choreographer could draw inspiration from two of the company's set pieces. The dancers transformed a bare stage by building structures with their bodies – in *Kmil* (Hop) the male dancers built a 5-foot-tall human chair, and in *Zaporozhysi*, spears, swords and geometrical symmetry illustrated Cossack warfare rituals.

*Danielle M. Georgiou is assistant director of the UT Arlington Dance Ensemble.*