

## L. Kuzmenko, Voice of Hope



**Larysa Kuzmenko** is a Toronto-based composer and pianist. Her music has been performed and broadcast throughout the world. Her works have been commissioned, performed and recorded on CD by many outstanding artists. Kuzmenko's works demonstrate a strong affinity towards the mainstream tradition of classical music. She imbues her music with strong melodic sense, and a firm rooting in traditional, albeit extended tonal processes. She has appeared as a pianist in several countries, and has performed at Carnegie Hall, the St. Lawrence Centre, Roy Thomson Hall, and Massey Hall, as well as several other venues throughout Canada. Larysa Kuzmenko is currently on staff at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Music, where she teaches piano, harmony, and composition. For more information, visit [www.LarysaKuzmenko.com](http://www.LarysaKuzmenko.com).

"Voice of Hope" was commissioned by the Vesnivka Choir and premiered at Runnymede United Church on November the 15th, 2003, by soprano Katerina Tchoubar and the Composers' Orchestra, conducted by Gary Kulesha. The concert was dedicated to the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the great Famine-Genocide of 1932-1933 in Ukraine.

The Famine-Genocide occurred as a direct result of the Soviet policy to crush the nationally conscious Ukrainian people - especially peasants and landowners - who most fervently resisted collectivization and supported the independence of Ukraine. The Soviet regime introduced unrealistically large quotas on grain and other agricultural products, stripping the peasants of their food supply. In August 1932, the regime authorized the confiscation of grain from peasant households and a month later enacted a law that authorized the death penalty or the "leniency" of 10 years exile for the theft of "social property" - grain and foodstuffs. The borders of Ukraine were officially sealed to prevent any migration or relief efforts. This made it difficult for the Western press to report on this catastrophe. At the same time, the Soviet regime dumped 1.7 million tons of grain on Western markets. This terror claimed the lives of between 7 to 10 million people. "Voice of Hope" is dedicated to Katerina Kozar, Tetiana, Petro Fylyp, Anatazia, Hryhorij Breha, brothers and sisters of the composer's mother Paraskevia Kuzmenko who died in the Famine.

## VOICE OF HOPE

words by Iryna Voitenko, translation by Marko Carynnyk

Mother, listen. Is someone knocking at the window?  
Poor exhausted little bird! How have you survived in this misery and strife?  
Who will feed you? We haven't a crumb of bread or a grain.  
We're cold and hungry; woe is us! Fly, fly across the sea!  
Tell everyone how we are suffering, how we are hungering.  
How many of us now have died. Why are we dying of hunger?

Villagers are gathering grain in the field, and Stalin has issued strict orders:  
"Gather the whole crop in Ukraine!" O woe is us!

Gendarmes are going from house to house. Scraping everything out,  
Every crumb of bread on the table, every cabbage.  
Children are weeping, mothers are sobbing, praying for a crust of bread.  
But no, the cruel Stalinist regime has set itself the goal of bringing people to their knees,  
Of making them into beggars and slaves.

Hunger is stalking the land, hunger is stalking in my Ukraine.  
Everyone is dying: the old, the women, the children. The village has fallen silent.  
The chatter of children can't be heard.  
The paths from house to house have grown over with weeds, everything is silent.  
O barbarous savage, your regime is cruel! But we haven't died! We're still alive!