

Svitanya

Eastern European Women's Vocal Ensemble



SVITANYA, which means “the light at sunrise” in multiple Slavic languages, is a women’s a cappella ensemble that specializes in music from Eastern Europe.

The songs we perform exude the spirit of traditional village music. Some songs are modern arrangements, some songs were learned from village source recordings, some were collected directly by our singers, and all songs are sung in their original languages. Our repertoire is quite diverse—ranging from strong and strident field-working songs to traditional dance tunes to lush and emotive arrangements—and all celebrate the timbres, rhythms, and harmonies indigenous to the region.

Most every song tells a story; some songs celebrate the mundane events of daily life, like cutting wheat in the fields or strolling in the street with musicians, while others depict life’s more poignant moments, such as losing a loved one to war or being married off while too young.

Bookings and Information:

215-848-2068 (Anne Ehrhart) info@svitanya.org www.svitanya.org

*Svitanya is a roster member of Pennsylvania Performing Artists on Tour.
Funding may be available to support performance engagements with presenters in DC, DE, MD, NJ, NY, OH, PA, WV and the US Virgin Islands.*

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Meet Svitanya!



Susan Anderson has been a “Balkanofile” for many years—singing, dancing, and playing instruments such as the gaida (goat-skin bagpipe), balalaika, tambura, and violin. Susan leads the International Folk Sounds orchestra and the Izvornotes, runs the Beaver Folk Dance group, performs Appalachian clogging with FiddleKicks, skis the world with her husband, and is a docent at the Elmwood Park Zoo.



Kayla Ankeny came to Svitanya from Sarah Lawrence College where she studied performing arts including dance, theater, and puppetry, as well as politics and French. In addition to Svitanya, she sings with Spiral Song, a feminist spirituality vocal group. Kayla is currently a student of dance at Temple University, manages to work occasionally as a Certified Massage Therapist, and studies Capoeira, a Brazilian martial art.



Anne Ehrhart has been an enthusiastic singer and folk dancer for most of her life. She and her daughter Leela began singing Slavic music 1998 with Slaveja Slavic Folk Chorus, until Svitanya was formed in 2000. Anne was the primary producer of the “First Light” CD. After more than 20 years as a software engineer with Mellon Bank, she is now the Managing Director of Voloshky Ukrainian Dance Ensemble.



Leela Ehrhart began singing with Slaveja Slavic Folk Chorus at age 11, before becoming part of Svitanya. Prior to that she performed with Philadelphia Revels for several years. A student at Drexel University, she is majoring in Psychology, and works in the Psychology Lab. Jewelry making is her other artistic passion. She works regularly at BumbleBeads, and her jewelry is available at www.leeladesigns.etsy.com.



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Suzanne Erb has played keyboards and sung most of her life, having continuously held church musical positions, and having sung in multiple choirs such as Choral Arts Society of Philadelphia. She is currently full-time organist and choir director at St. John's Episcopal Church in Essington, PA. Her musical passions also include composition and improvisation. Suzanne has for many years been a social worker and advocate for people with disabilities.



Kimberly Fedchak is Svitanya's musical director. She plays many instruments including piano, ney (Turkish flute), clarinet, recorder, accordion, flute and percussion. Kim also performs with world fusion band Animus and plays piano for English country dances. Kim is of Ukrainian descent and—small world—turns out to be related to Mary! Kim has a PhD in Russian, has taught Russian at Swarthmore, and currently teaches math at Lower Merion High School.



Chrissy Steele trained at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, majoring in painting and printmaking. She has studied Tamil, Arabic, and French and has a master's degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. Chrissy recently completed a house rehab project—a long time dream—and is now ready to admit that she wasn't born to be a construction worker. She is now teaching English to foreign students at Drexel University.



Petia Zamfirova was born in Bulgaria and moved to Baltimore when she was 14 years old. As a child she would often stand on her grandmother's steps and sing folk songs, and enjoys continuing that tradition. Her musical background also includes 12 years of classical training on the piano, and a future goal is to "rock out" the accordion! A recent Drexel graduate, Petia currently works as a research assistant at a Cancer Research Center at the University of Pennsylvania.