

SHUMKA's

UKRAINKA

The Four Faces of
LESYA UKRAINKA

Lesya Ukrainka - a renowned Ukrainian artist, storyteller, poet, and humanitarian - led a troubled life. Suffering from medical ailments that limited her physically, she lived vicariously through her art. She is a legend among the Ukrainian diaspora, and as a woman, is especially inspiring in a patriarchal culture. Shumka's newest production focuses on the "four faces" of Lesia Ukrainka – the dreamer, the traditionalist, the lover, and the leader. Her hope for Ukraine's independence in a series of troubled times is as poignant as ever today.

The Dreamer

Lesya was a poet, writer and a storyteller. Her most famous tale is *Lisova Pisnya - The Forest Song*. Replicated in many forms over time, this story is one of a forest nymph and the man she falls in love with...forever.

The Traditionalist

Lesya respected Ukrainian traditions and centuries-old celebrations and referred to them often in her works. *Zelenyi Sviata - The Green Holiday* marks the end of spring and the beginning of the summer season. A princess is chosen to lead the festivities in this tribute to the traditions Lesya held dear to her heart.

The Lover

Lesya had two male loves in her life, was married once, and found solace in a long-standing romantic relationship with a female friend and fellow poet. Lesya's love stories fueled her work, but often ended in tragedy and strife. In this piece, *Montanky* (talisman dolls) lead her male lover to his next journey in the afterlife, and she finds comfort in her next love.

The Leader

Lesya lived in a time of radical ideas, revolution and societal change. With the influence of leaders such as Lesya, the people grew to realize they could take control of their own destiny and throw off the yoke of their imperial rulers.

These Four Faces are not a literal depiction of Lesya Ukrainka but are a representation of her work, life and dreams.