

Victorian's celebrate 20 years of Ukraine's Independence

Sunday 20th August was a day of celebrations as the Ukrainian community in Victoria gathered at the BMW Edge in Federation Square to celebrate the last two decades of Ukraine's Independence.

The festival attracted over 4000 people throughout the day, each enjoying the traditional music and dance offered, during a three-hour program, which was opened by the Minister for Planning Matthew Guy and the President of the Association of Ukrainians in Victoria Michael Moravski.

Songs and music performed by Lesya Ukrainka Bandurist Ensemble, Markiyan & Oksana Melnychenko, Tremolo and Melbourne Accordion Orchestra lifted the already festive atmosphere. The mood continued throughout the day as Iskra and Verhovyna performed traditional dancers, whilst Rukopash mixed Ukrainian dance with marshal arts. Cappella of Ss Peter and Paul, Rodyna, Hoverla and Cheremosh sang uplifting folk, traditional and religious songs.

Whilst the vast audience enjoyed the program, they indulged in delicious Ukrainian delicacies of verenyky and borshch as well as cakes and sweets. Ukrainian beer and vodka was also flowing, as the crowd shared stories and memories of their trips to the Motherland throughout the past twenty years.

Exhibitions and stalls of tradition Ukrainian artifacts and tapestries, pysanky and artworks surrounded the periphery of the room, providing color and depth to the already rich room of the BMW Edge.

Current Great Western Sydney coach and ex Essendon Coach Kevin Sheedy was a surprise guest, who was not shy to talk to the crowd about his admiration for the Ukrainian community here in Melbourne.

The day concluded with an extraordinary performance by Australian born now Canadian Bandurist Victor Mishalow.

The 20th Anniversary of Ukraine's Independence, was a time for the community to reflect on the people, the culture and the riches of the country we hold so close to our hearts. The festival was a day to celebrate the freedom our forefathers fought so hard for.

The AUV and the festival committee would like to thank all those involved for their participation in making this celebration such a wonderful, memorable Independence Day.

Theresa Romaniw

Chair AUV Organising Committee