



# Solomea

Star of the Golden Age of Opera

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# **Solomea Krushelnytska**

(1872-1952)



**The world's leading dramatic soprano during the golden age of opera from 1900 to 1910.**

**She rose from humble beginnings to stardom performing on the leading opera stages of the world.**

# Solomea Rose From A Humble Background



**Solomea grew up in Galicia, under Austro-Hungarian rule, in what is today Western Ukraine,**

**Her father was a Ukrainian Greek Catholic priest, who was allowed to marry. The family included five daughters and two sons. They lived in a small village called Bila.**

**It was there that Solomea's love of music began, as she often sang Ukrainian folks songs with her family. After turning down a marriage engagement, Solomea was sent to study music in Lviv.**

# Solomea Rose to Stardom in Italy



**Following graduation from a music academy in Lviv, Solomea moved to Milan, Italy. There she rose to stardom in the late 1890's. She knew the words and lyrics to over 50 operas.**

# The Golden Age of Opera



During the years 1900 to 1910 opera reigned supreme as the highest form of cultural entertainment around the world.

During this period, Solomea was at the pinnacle of her fame. As one of the greatest opera stars of her time, she was invited to perform at the top opera houses around the world.

# Solomea

Solomea starred in the leading roles of great operas such as:

Faust, Aida, La Boheme, Manon Lescaut, Troubadour, Tosca.

She performed at the most prestigious opera theaters worldwide including La Scala in Milan, the Opera Theatre in Paris, and the Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires.



**Solomea Krushelnytska**

# Solomea Performed Opposite the World's Great Opera Legends



**Enrico Caruso**



**Mattia Battistini**



**Titta Ruffo**



**Fiodor Chaliapin**



**Giacomo Puccini**

## **The Story of Solomea and Madame Butterfly**

**In 1904 world leading composer Giacomo Puccini (1858 – 1924) decided to stage his new opera, Madame Butterfly at La Scala in Milan. Despite arduous preparations, the performance was a tragic failure.**





**Arturo Toscanini**

## **The Story of Solomea and Madame Butterfly**

**Distraught by the failure, Puccini went to see his good friend, director Arturo Toscanini, to get advice on how to save his opera.**

**Toscanini told him only one singer could save his opera:**

**Solomea Krushelnytska.**

# The Story of Solomea and Madame Butterfly

Despite the risk to her career of stepping into a production that had a very public failure with the leading stars of the day at La Scala, the premier opera theater in the world, Solomea agreed to help her friend.

After extensive revisions, the opera was staged at the Teatro Grande in Brescia, Italy with Solomea playing the lead role of Cio Cio San.

The revised opera was a great success and Solomea would go on to perform in Madame Butterfly 100 times in various theaters across Europe.



**Solomea Krushelnytska**

# Where Solomea Performed



## **Solomea's Final Years**

**Solomea returned to Galicia just before the outbreak of World War II.**

**She lived the twilight of her life under Nazi and Soviet rule.**

**All her wealth both in Italy and in Ukraine was confiscated by these regimes.**

**Solomea's final days were spent teaching young singers at the music conservatory where she had once studied.**



**Solomea Krushelnytska  
by Y. Muzyka**



Andy Semotiuk, Author

## The Biography

Solomea's rags-to-riches life story is an amazing odyssey, an incredible testament to the strength of the human spirit, a noteworthy example of dedication to art and an inspiration to women everywhere. Told from the perspective of a family member, Andy Semotiuk, the clear presentation style is hypnotic and magnetic and a delight for readers.

As a member of Solomea's family, (Andy's grandmother was Solomea's sister) the author had unimpeded access to the Krushelnytsky museum while he was in Lviv on several occasions and had help from its staff for virtually anything he needed. He traveled throughout Europe, the United States, and South America to do his research.

All her life, Solomea had to fight to be recognized for who she was—a Ukrainian woman and descendant of great Ukrainian history. She and her supporters had to continually defend her successes from cultural appropriation by others.

While exploring these themes, certain questions gnawed at the author:

- How did Solomea rise above thousands of other talented singers to reach the very top of the opera world?
- How is it that she died in such tragic circumstances when she lived on top of the world during her career?
- Why has her story largely been forgotten in the history of world music, while the memory of her male counterparts, such as the tenors Enrico Caruso, Mattia Battistini, baritone Titta Ruffo or bass Feodor Chialiapin been preserved?

As her biographer, Solomea's life story presented the author with a huge collection of details to consider. As a U.S. and Canadian immigration lawyer and a member of the New York and California bars in the United States as well as Ontario and B.C. bars in Canada, Andy was familiar with sorting out facts from fiction, doing effective research, and in organizing the narrative. His work as a Forbes contributor and a former United Nations correspondent in New York and the fact that he had written and published three books before, helped him to prepare this work for publication.

# The Documentary

**Solomea is a documentary about the once world-renowned Ukrainian opera singer Solomea Krushelnytska viewed through the eyes of her great-grand niece, Canadian filmmaker, Natalie Semotiuk.**

**It reveals the journey of Krushelnytska's triumphs and struggles as she rose to the very heights of opera during its golden age and then exposes the tragedy of the latter years of her life when she was forced to live under Soviet rule.**

**It also shares the story of the Semotiuk family as they learn more about their connection to their aunt and the sacrifices she made to become the legendary figure that is known throughout Ukraine but largely forgotten elsewhere.**



# Solomea Visuals



[Click here to watch teaser #1](#)

[Click here to watch teaser #2](#)



Natalie Semotiuk

## The Filmmaker

**Natalie Semotiuk** is the founder of Courageous Heart Productions.

Most notably, Natalie worked as the Producer for the Toronto International Film Festival Rising Stars Programme for 2017-2019. She worked with Motel Pictures in casting, business affairs and artist liaison in producing film projects.

Additionally, she produced 50 video interviews with creative professionals for The Profiles Project, co-wrote and produced the play “Heartbeat and Other Ways to Say I Love You,” and worked as the Production Manager on two award-winning short films “We Forgot to Break Up” and “Talking Heads.”

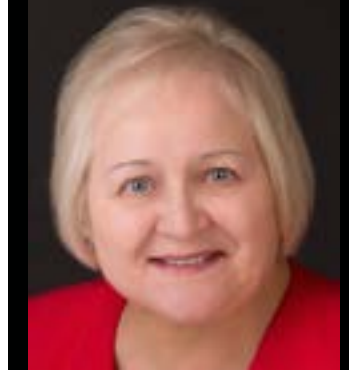


# The Production Team



**Andy Semotiuk**

Biographer



**Ann Semotiuk**

Editor



**Natalie Semotiuk**

Director / Filmmaker



**Yuri Grytsevych**

Researcher



**Adriana Luhovy**

Graphic Designer

# Supporters

## Organizations:

- Musical memorial Museum of Solomea Krushelnytska – Lviv
- Solomea Krushelnytska Lviv Opera Theater
- Ukrainian Canadian Opera Society

## Individuals:

- The late Myroslav Skoryk – prominent composer of Ukraine



**S O L O M E A  
K R U S H E L N Y T S K A**  
Lviv Opera Theater

# Target Audience

**This project will be of interest to:**

- **Opera lovers**
- **Ukrainians**
- **Ukrainian diaspora**
- **Feminists**
- **Eastern Europeans**
- **South American opera enthusiasts**
- **Opera history lovers**
- **Music lovers**
- **Lovers of 20th Century history**



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**Solomea Krushelnytska**