

Oleksandr Koshyts (1875–1944) was a prominent Ukrainian choral conductor, composer, ethnographer, and educator who introduced the world to the beauty of Ukrainian music and transformed it into an instrument of cultural diplomacy.

He was born on 12 September 1875, in the village of Romashky, Kaniv county (now Kyiv oblast), into a priest's family. As a young man, Koshyts began his ethnographic work by recording folk songs. During his expeditions to Kuban (1903–1905), he documented about a thousand works, primarily historical and Cossack songs.

In 1912, Koshyts worked as a conductor at Mykola Sadovskyi's theater, staging operas by Mykola Lysenko. He later became the head of the choral section of the Kyiv Opera. A key stage of his career was the creation of the Ukrainian Republican Choir in 1919 – a professional choir meant to represent Ukraine abroad. Under his direction, the choir embarked on a grand five-year tour across more than 17 countries, giving around 600 concerts. It was during this tour that the world first heard "Shchedryk" by Mykola Leontovych, a piece that would later become world-famous "The Carol of the Bells."

The choir's repertoire consisted of arrangements of folk songs, spiritual music, and works by Ukrainian composers, all adapted for the Western stage. Koshyts's conducting style – without a baton, using only his eyes, hands, and facial

## 150 YEARS SINCE THE BIRTH OF OLEKSANDR KOSHYTS



expressions – was distinguished by its emotionality, fluidity, and deep understanding of folklore. His artistry impressed even the most demanding audiences. The choir's guestbook contains autographs from hundreds of prominent figures who expressed their admiration for Ukrainian art.

*"I reveled in the thought that it was my honor to show the whole world the soul of our people – so gentle, so powerful, so elemental, yet at the same time as mysterious as nature itself," the artist wrote in his memoirs "With a Song Across the World."*

Koshyts authored over a hundred choral arrangements of folk songs of various genres, five liturgies, and numerous spiritual compositions based on Ukrainian melodies. After the tour concluded, he settled in the United States, and later in Canada, where he continued to work with Ukrainian choirs, including founding the Ukrainian National Choir in Winnipeg.

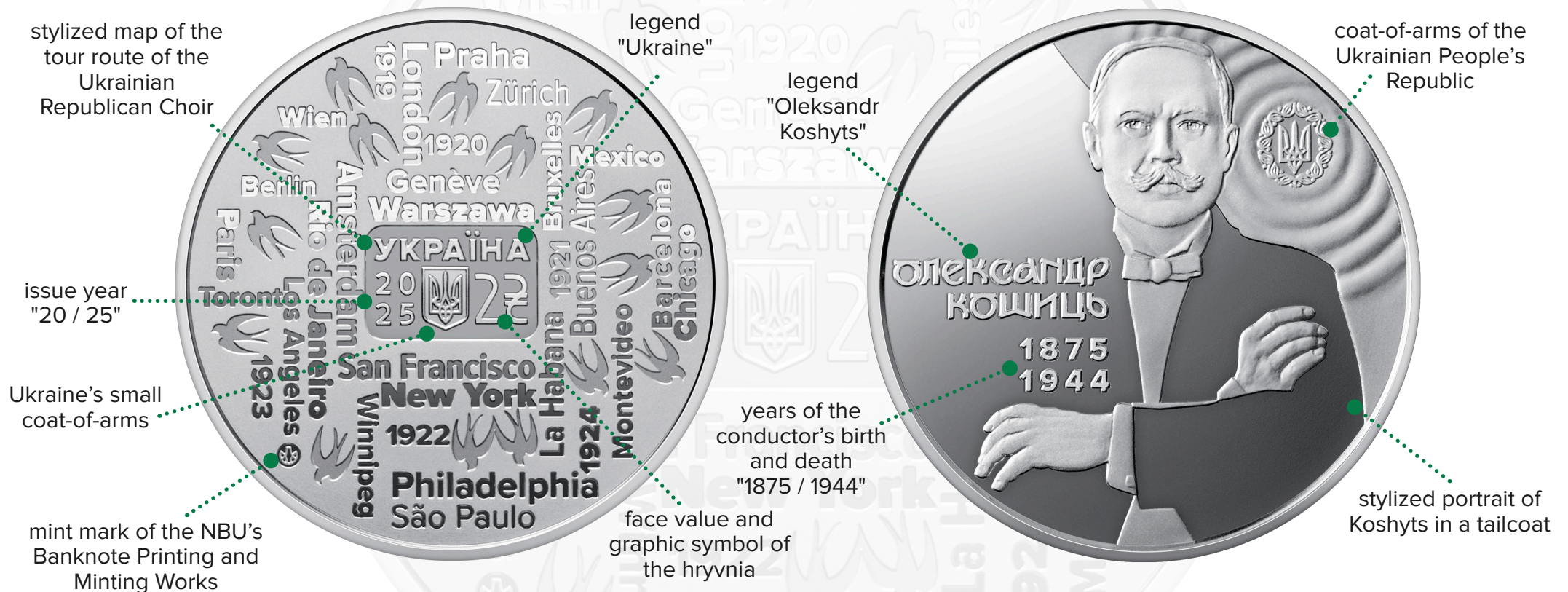
In Soviet Ukraine, Koshyts's name was banned, and his relatives were repressed. It was only in the late 1980s that the artist began to be reintroduced into Ukrainian culture.

Koshyts gave Ukrainian song wings so it could soar beyond borders – as the voice of a nation striving for freedom, dignity, and recognition.

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# 150 YEARS SINCE THE BIRTH OF OLEKSANDR KOSHYTS

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Issue date	Metal	Diameter	Quality	Edge	Mintage
12 September 2025	nickel silver	31.0 mm	special uncirculated	grooved	up to 50,000