

Souvenirs & Mementos

Page 2 THE COBOURG STAR, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1973



Thirteen-year-old Wasyl Sydorenko, Toronto was on hand Sunday at historic Barnum House to play his own composition entitled, "The Red Carpet March" at the presentation ceremonies of a strip of the red rug that Queen Elizabeth II and Prince walked upon on their visit to Cobourg.

Wasyl Sydorenko playing his "Red Carpet March" on the Clementi, Collard & Collard piano at Barnum House on September 9, 1973.



Luella and Gorman Young, curators of Barnum House, Grafton, Ontario as painted by Petro Sydorenko in 1977.



*Victoria Hall, Cobourg, Ontario.
Photograph from 1865.*



*Souvenir cover specially cancelled
on the Royal Train, June 27-28, 1973.*





**HISTORIC
BARNUM HOUSE**
1813 - 1817
Grafton, Ontario

Grafton, Ont.
Dear Maryland all
Just a brief note to ask if it
would be convenient to play
the piano at Barnum House
Sept. ^{9th} ~~8th~~ Sunday at 3 o'clock. At the
dedication of the Red Carpet the
Queen had on — More details
will be contained in the letter we

are sending out to Members.

Does this gift arouse you to
compose or have you something
you would like to play — Let me
know —

Yours sincerely
Luella

Mr. & Mrs. G. G. Young
Cherry Hill Road
Grafton, Ontario K0K 2G0



Mr. Wasyly Sydorenko,
to Mr. Petro Sydorenko
34 Brynmell Ave
Toronto, M5S
Ontario.

Barnum House, Luella Young, her husband Gorman, afternoon teas at Cherry Hill, New Year's Day parties... and the St. Andrew's United Church concert in the summer of 1972. These are some of the hallmark memories from a time, which is now but a long forgotten chapter in the history of Grafton, Ontario.

During the summer of 1972, our family became acquainted with the curator of Barnum House, Luella Young—a retired school teacher and local cultural maven. A benefit concert was organized at St. Andrew's United Church to show off my young talent and raise funds for the new hymn books. Needless to say, that summer I wrote very little music as I was busy preparing for the concert.

In contrast, 1973 was one of my more prolific years as a composer. When Mrs. Young asked me to write a piece for the installation of the Red Carpet in Barnum House, I was ready to oblige. The details of the event I have described in my letter to Queen Elizabeth II. Long live the Queen!



St. Andrew's United Church, Grafton.



Wasyl Sydorenko

34 Brumell Avenue
Toronto, Ontario
Canada M6S 4G5

May 24, 2015

Her Majesty the Queen
Buckingham Palace
London SW1A 1AA
United Kingdom

Your Majesty,

It is with great pleasure that I send you this small gift, the *Red Carpet March*, a rather belated souvenir of your visit to Canada in 1973. Allow me to share with you in brief the history of its creation.

Following your visit to Cobourg, Ontario in June 1973, a piece of red carpet from the ceremonies at Victoria Hall was donated to nearby Barnum House, now a heritage loyalist property of the Province of Ontario. My father, Ukrainian-Canadian painter Petro Sydorenko, was on excellent terms with the curators of Barnum House, Luella and Gorman Young, so I was invited to write music to accompany the grand opening of the newly-installed carpet in the main hallway and stairs of the building. I performed my composition on a historical Clementi, Collard & Collard pianoforte from the 1820s. Some believe this to be a unique instrument, the only one extant of its manufacture, and now part of the Barnum House collection. It was a major community event with media coverage by the *Cobourg Star*, the oldest weekly newspaper in Canada.

As a classical composer, I began writing music in earnest at age 10, in 1970. Recently, I have begun to revisit my youthful compositions with the skill of a mature musician. I am much surprised at how little "improvement" is required to make these early gems sparkle. The other day, I revisited the *Red Carpet March* and polished it to perfection. Realizing that the work is a masterpiece of musical invention and worthy of your attention, I have taken the liberty to dedicate it to Your Majesty. I hope you will appreciate both its youthful spirit and mature character. May you find the *Red Carpet March* as delightful and entertaining as those who first heard it played by me back in September 1973.

Faithfully yours,



I must admit that, having been born in Canada, I have grown up to be a monarchist. As an Orthodox Christian, I also view the sacrament of anointing a monarch with special reverence. So it is with humble pride that I share with all my letter to the Queen, and the response I received from her most trusted confidant, the Lady-in-Waiting, Mary Morrison (see below). Since then, the Queen has achieved an historic milestone—becoming Britain's longest-reigning monarch. Alas, the letter from Lady Mary may not survive into posterity. Its ink has already begun to fade. May the march I wrote fare better!



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

23rd June 2015.

Dear Mr Sydorenko,

The Queen wishes me to thank you for your letter enclosing a copy of your musical composition, the *Red Carpet March*, which you wrote following Her Majesty's visit to Canada in 1973.

It was kind of you to tell The Queen of the events leading to you writing this piece, so many years ago, and which you performed at Barnum House. Her Majesty was interested to know that you have recently made improvements to some of your compositions, and it was thoughtful of you to send this revised work as a gift for The Queen.

Her Majesty was most grateful for your generous gesture and I am to thank you, once again, for writing to The Queen at this time.

Yours sincerely
Mary Morrison.

Lady-in-Waiting

Mr W Sydorenko

