

## KOSSUTH'S MESSAGE: *Carroll News – Press Release*

### About the Program:

**“Kossuth’s Message”** is a special program and live presentation to be held at John Carroll University in Cleveland, OH (1 John Carroll Blvd., University Hts., OH 44118) on Wednesday, October 3, 2012, in the Administration Building, room AD 258, starting at 7 pm. It is essentially a historical reenactment, of the type with which people already may be familiar, as for example, when the actor Hal Holbrook does his reenactments of Abraham Lincoln. It is “history alive.”

The presentation is **in English**, and it is intended for all audiences and to familiarize everyone with the words and deeds of Louis **Kossuth**, especially as he toured pre-Civil War Ohio. A questions/answer and discussion session will follow the live presentation. The program is free and open to all students, faculty, and everyone in the JCU community, as well as to the general public. On-campus parking is also free and adjacent to the building.

**“Kossuth’s Message”** is built around **Kossuth’s** address to the Ohio legislature and his reflections at the beginning and end of his U.S. tour in 1851-52. Louis **Kossuth**, the governor of revolutionary Hungary in the late 1840s, visited the U.S. seeking support for Hungarian independence from the Habsburg monarchy. His tour had an important juncture in Ohio where **Kossuth** made a number of stops in Ohio cities. His visit was a focal point in American popular and political life, coming in the midst of a pre-Civil War Constitutional crisis as Americans grappled with slavery and the nature of the Union. **“Kossuth’s Message”** summarizes as well as re-enacts **Kossuth** encounters with pre-Civil War Americans.

Although **“Kossuth’s Message”** is intended for general audiences, it would be of special interest to those interested in pre-Civil War America/USA. **“Kossuth’s Message”** links a specific event in European history (the Revolutions of 1848-49) through the person of **Louis Kossuth**, the Governor of Revolutionary Hungary, with the pre-Civil War domestic struggles of the United States during the **Kossuth** visit and speaking tour of the USA in 1851-52.

During this time period, **Kossuth**, the Hungarian champion of freedom, visited the United States seeking support for Hungarian independence. This tour also had an important juncture in Ohio, where **Kossuth** made a number of stops in cities like Cincinnati and Columbus. In the latter city, when he gave his talk in the Ohio State Legislature in Columbus February 6, 1852, **Kossuth** even used the words that appear later in **President Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address**: ***“The Spirit of our age is democracy. All for the people, all by the people, nothing about the people without the people.”*** And that was 11 years **before** Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address. *Some people even believe that Abraham Lincoln might have borrowed some words or ideas from Louis Kossuth.*

**“Kossuth’s Message”** is a **Humanities** project focusing on the ideas and values of societies in the midst of turmoil over ideas and values. It confronts the human dilemmas of personal freedom (slavery) with the quest for liberty as a cultural community, i.e., independence from the Habsburg Empire. All this plays out in the speeches, reception and personal struggles of **Kossuth** during his 1851-52 tour. It is also reflected in the music and popular responses that the **Kossuth** phenomenon produced. The humanities focus of the program is maintained throughout by keeping track of the moral and intellectual challenges that **Kossuth** faced.

## The “Traveling Road Show”

“**Kossuth’s Message**” is being taken to numerous communities in the state of Ohio. Presentations take place at universities, colleges or high schools. Interaction across generations is particularly important for the question and answer, discussion sessions following each presentation.

The program is funded by a **Grant from the Ohio Humanities Council**. At JCU, it is sponsored by the following divisions: the **College of Arts and Sciences, the Humanities Program, the Modern European Studies Program**; and the following departments: **Classical and Modern Languages and Cultures, Tim Russert Dept. of Communication & Theatre Arts, English, History, and Political Science**.

The sponsoring organization of “**Kossuth’s Message**” is **Ohio Northern University** via its **Department of History, Politics, and Justice**. Located in Ada, Ohio in Hardin County, ONU is a private Methodist affiliated university founded in 1871.

“Opening Night” for the program took place at Lake Hope (Zaleski, Ohio) on August 17th, and there are four other presentations scheduled so far. These are: Columbus, Ohio, on September 9th; Toledo, Ohio on September 16th; Dayton, Ohio on September 23rd; Ohio Northern University in Ada, Ohio on October 11th.

### **Benefit to educational institutions:**

“**Kossuth’s Message**” strengthens educational opportunities, first, because it enhances the unconventional instructional capabilities for those who are either participants or ordinary audience members. Second, it increases contact with non-traditional student populations. Third, it develops outreach capabilities to the general public. Finally, “**Kossuth’s Message**” adds to the service function of the sponsoring institutions such as JCU for society at large. All these elements contribute to the **Humanities** and thereby also add to Ohio’s exposure as well as JCU’s exposure to the **Humanities**.

Both the performance and the staging provide the backdrop for the spoken words of the overall presentation. The “talking heads” are kept from becoming just that by the visual and musical presentations linking the spoken words to the events and individuals on the ground.

**Kossuth’s** tour of the United States is reenacted by having an **actor (Tamas Csajka**, alternating with **Endre Szentkiralyi**) play-acting **Kossuth** within the one-hour program. The actor is supported by one additional actor (**Andrew Ludanyi** as Laszlo Karoly, **Kossuth’s** personal secretary), two narrators (**Michael Loughlin** and **Ellen Wilson**), and a folksinger/musician (**Katica Szabo**), as well as a presentation of background materials that provide maps of the time and pictures of the individuals encountered by **Kossuth**. The **narrators** will present the American and European scene respectively. Their readings will be linked by **Kossuth** songs as well as English language soliloquies by **Kossuth** at the beginning and the conclusion of his tour. The climax will be **Kossuth’s** speech to the Representatives of the Ohio State Legislature on February 6, 1852. (Abbreviated in length from 30 minutes to ca. 8-10 minutes.) The **narrators** will also provide the wider American and European contexts within which the **Kossuth** presentations will raise the issues of **national independence** and **personal freedom**.

### **More about Louis Kossuth (1802 - 1894)**

#### **Who was he, and why is he important for American audiences?**

In 1848, the remarkable Louis **Kossuth** led the fight for Hungarian independence from the Habsburg empire. His vision was to create a democracy in Hungary modeled after the USA.

**Kossuth** was the first foreign statesman officially invited to the US since the **Marquis de Lafayette**. In 1851, an American ship brought him to the US as *"the nation's guest."* **Kossuth** had dinner with **then-US President Millard Fillmore & addressed the US Congress in English.**

**Kossuth** County, Iowa, is named in **Kossuth's** honor. A statue of the freedom fighter stands in front of the county Court House in Algona, Iowa, the county seat. The small US towns of **Kossuth**, Ohio and **Kossuth**, Mississippi are named in honor of Louis **Kossuth**.

A bust of Lajos **Kossuth** is housed in the United States Capitol Rotunda in Washington, D.C. A statue of **Kossuth** stands in New York City near the Columbia University campus. In the Bronx, New York; Brooklyn, New York; Utica, New York; Ronkonkoma, New York; Bohemia, New York; Newark, New Jersey; Haledon, New Jersey; Lafayette, Indiana; and Columbus, Ohio there are streets named in honor of Lajos **Kossuth**.

#### **The Cleveland Connection:**

Other statues of **Kossuth** are sprinkled throughout the US, including in University Circle in **Cleveland, Ohio**. There is also a **Kossuth** Park at the intersection of East 121st Street and East Shaker Boulevard, just west of Shaker Square, in **Cleveland**.

The **Cleveland** statue is in a park on Euclid Avenue between Chester and MLK Blvd and near CWRU in the University Circle area. If you google **"KOSSUTH- CLEVELAND"** you can see a photo of the statue – if you are a Clevelander, you have probably driven by it hundreds of times and maybe not even known who that was!

#### **Louis Kossuth:**

**Where in the Cleveland area would you find this statue?**

Photos on : <http://www.clevelandseniors.com/forever/photoquiz35.htm>



**Louis Kossuth statue in Cleveland** near University Circle on Euclid Avenue between Chester and MLK Blvd and near CWRU



The Louis **Kossuth** statue is in the David E Davis Sculpture Garden on Euclid Avenue between Chester and MLK.



There are three **Kossuth** statues in the US: New York, Washington and here in Cleveland. The statue of Louis **Kossuth** (1802 - 1894) in the US Capitol reads "Father of Hungarian Democracy."



**Above: Kossuth** bust in US Capitol rotunda in Washington DC – Note = This photo is copyrighted.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/40429709@N06/3720126384/>

Memorials to **Kossuth** include a bronze plaque with those words and his image on the first floor of the City Hall of Columbus, the capital of Ohio.

The 1848 revolt led by **Kossuth** was crushed when the Russian czar came to the aid of the Austrian Hapsburg emperor. The bloody conflict led to *“The Great Compromise”* — the creation of Austria-Hungary. Louis **Kossuth**, generally considered a hero of **ALL** the revolutions that swept across Europe in 1848, arrived in the United States from Britain in late 1851 to raise funds and arms for the liberation of his native Hungary. **Kossuth** was the second foreigner after the **Marquis de Lafayette** to address the Joint Meeting of the United States Congress. In New York he was feted with a reception that only **George Washington** and **Lafayette** had received previously. **Then-President Millard Fillmore** entertained **Kossuth** at the **White House** on December 5 and again on January 7, 1852.

The **US Congress** organized a banquet for **Kossuth**, which was supported by all political parties. **Abraham Lincoln** met with **Kossuth** in Springfield, IL, in a celebration which he organized for the honor of **Kossuth**, was **Kossuth** was feted at **Independence Hall in Philadelphia**, addressed a joint session of Congress in Washington and traveled across the United States in 1852. Cannons were fired when his train pulled into **Columbus, OH** in Feb of that year. He made a short speech to an immense gathering. The next day, **Kossuth** addressed a crowd that filled the square from Broad to State streets In Columbus, OH, then addressed a gathering that evening at a large meeting at City Hall. Numerous memorializations have been made to Louis **Kossuth** in the **US Congressional Record** and in the **US National Archives and Records**.

#### **Cast of Characters for the “Kossuth’s Message” Program:**

**Tamas Csajka** will alternate with **Endre Szentkiralyi** in performing as **Louis Kossuth**. Mr. Csajka is an amateur actor who has performed the roles of historical figures. Tamas Csajka grew up in Kosice (Kassa) a city in eastern Slovakia. As a leader of the local Hungarian boy scouts he has had multiple onstage Hungarian-language performances not only in Kosice and Bratislava (Pozsony) in Slovakia, but also – since his move to the United States – in front of Cleveland’s Hungarian community, mostly at ethnic nationality commemorations. Mr. Csajka also has five years of folk dance stage performance experience. He has been involved in annual public performances and in skits for large-scale campfire shows as scoutmaster for the Hungarian scout troop in Cleveland. He earned his Master’s degree in Mathematics at Safarik University in Kosice and was a one year Visiting Scholar at UC Berkeley. He married a Clevelander and is now settled in Columbus, Ohio 43206 (e-mail: [csajka\\_tamas@hotmail.com](mailto:csajka_tamas@hotmail.com)) Mr. Csajka has been employed as a software

developer for the past ten years and is currently a financial specialist and actuarial analyst at Nationwide Financial in Columbus, Ohio. His English language skills are excellent and his acting passion has been a life-long hobby.

**Endre Szentkiralyi** alternates with **Tamas Csajka** in playing the role of Louis **Kossuth**. Mr. Szentkiralyi studied English and German at Cleveland State University and earned an M.A. in English at the University of Akron. He has edited several books of oral histories including *56 Stories* (assistant editor and website content manager) and *Clevelandben még élnek magyarok? [Are there Still Hungarians Living in Cleveland?]* and recently published an article on the émigré writer Áron Gábor in *The Hungarian Quarterly*. He currently teaches German at Nordonia Middle School near Cleveland and works with Cleveland State University on numerous projects. His most recent project is the completion of a book entitled: *Service and Sacrifice: Hungarians from Cleveland in the U.S. Military 1951-2011*. He resides in Cleveland and is married to Eszti Pigniczky and has three children. E-mail [Endre.Szentkiralyi@nordoniaschools.org](mailto:Endre.Szentkiralyi@nordoniaschools.org)

**Ellen Wilson**, Professor of American History, Chair (since 1992) of the Department of History, Politics and Justice at Ohio Northern University, also **Project Director and Narrator of American Context**, resides in Ada, Ohio 45810 (e-mail: [e-wilson@onu.edu](mailto:e-wilson@onu.edu)). Professor Wilson received her B.A. (1973) from Angelo University in Texas and her M.A. and Ph.D. (1982) both in American History from Miami of Ohio University. Her dissertation and research has focused on the Virginia Military Tract and Ohio Land Policy and the American frontier experience in general. Her teaching interests have been pre-Civil War American history and Ohio history. She has also done extensive research and field work in Canadian history.

**Michael Loughlin**, Professor of European History, also **Narrator of European Context**, in the project. He resides in Ada, Ohio 45810 (e-mail: [m-loughlin@onu.edu](mailto:m-loughlin@onu.edu)). Professor Loughlin received his B.A. in History and Psychology (1969), his M.A. in History (1975), and his Ph.D. in Modern European History (1987) all at Indiana University (Bloomington). At Ohio Northern he has held the Wilfred E. Binkley Chair in History six times from 1993 to 2011. His research covers Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He is an authority on Gustave Herve the French revolutionary socialist. Loughlin has taught classes on both the French and the American Revolution as well as courses on pre-Civil War American history. Since coming to ONU he has participated in, created, or promoted more than 100 lectures, discussions, panels, or other events connected to international affairs and education. One of his major areas of interest is pre-World War I Eastern Europe.

**Katica Szabo**, from Budapest, Hungary, **Singer/Musician and Power Point Manager**, (e-mail: [katicica123@gmail.com](mailto:katicica123@gmail.com)). She is an invitee of the Hungarian Communion of Friends who will be present at the Zaleski (Lake Hope) conference to provide instruction in folk songs. She also has an excellent repertoire of “**Kossuth** Songs” which will provide the verbal presentations with musical transitions and linkages. Miss Szabo has also edited the power-point presentation that provides the visual context for the project narrative.

**Andrew Ludanyi**, Emeritus Professor of Political Science, **Project planner and coordinator**, Ada, Ohio 45810 (e-mail: [a-ludanyi@onu.edu](mailto:a-ludanyi@onu.edu)) and writer of the present proposal. Professor Ludanyi received his B.A. in History from Elmhurst College (Illinois) in 1963 and his M.A. (1965) and Ph.D. (1971) in Government from Louisiana State University. His research has focused on interethnic and inter-nationality relations in East Central Europe, with particular attention to developments in the Transylvanian region of Romania and the Vojvodina region of northern Yugoslavia/Serbia. He studied the rise of nationalism in the Habsburg Empire and the Revolution of 1848-49. A recent study of his on this era was a direct lead in to the current proposal:

„Research Note: Robespierre? **Kossuth**? Lincoln? Obama?“ which appeared in *Hungarian Heritage* (Budapest) Vol.11 (2010).

#### **Humanities Scholar Evaluators:**

**Steven B. Vardy**, is McAnulty Distinguished Professor of European History, Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15282 (e-mail: [Vardy@duq.edu](mailto:Vardy@duq.edu) ), and one of the foremost **Kossuth** scholars in the United States.

**Martha Pereszlenyi-Pinter**, Chair of the Department of Classical and Modern Languages and Associate Professor of French, John Carroll University, Cleveland, Ohio 44118 (e-mail: [mperezshenyi@jcu.edu](mailto:mperezshenyi@jcu.edu) ). Professor Pereszlenyi-Pinter is an excellent scholar of the literature of the **Kossuth** era.

#### **Project Advisers and Consultants:**

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**Peter Ujvagi**, Former State Representative from Lucas County, helped locate **Kossuth** speech in State Archival Collection, Toledo, Ohio 43605 ( e-mail: [psujvagi@co.lucas.oh.us](mailto:psujvagi@co.lucas.oh.us) )

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