

# OP-ED/FEATURES

## Long journey brings talented teachers to Winston-Salem State University

By Erik Spencer  
ARGUS STAFF

When Ludovic and Doina Kovalik graduated from college in Romania, they were unaware of the road that lay before them. Both had a love for language and literature, and most of all, for each other.

The Kovaliks arrived as part of the faculty of Winston-Salem State University after a long and arduous journey, one that brought them halfway around the world to teach in the U.S. Since 2004, they have been teaching in the Department of English and Foreign Languages.

Ludovic and Doina grew up in Arad, a city in western Romania. "It's a region we call Transylvania, and Americans are familiar with Transylvania from Bram Stoker's novel [Dracula]," Doina said.

"We are what Americans call, 'high school sweethearts,'" she said. The couple met in the spring semester of their junior year. After high school, Doina enrolled in college in Romania.

Ludovic explained that he got drafted for 10 months of military training. This service was required by law, at that time, in Communist

Romania. Before going to college he had to take a university entrance exam.

"If you did well you got drafted for 10 months of military training, and if you did poorly you got 18 months," he said. At any rate, when Ludovic enrolled in college, he was a year behind Doina.

Having graduated from college in Romania with bachelor's degrees in English and French languages and literatures, the Kovaliks went on to teach English as a foreign language in Romania for several years at Baia Mare University.

At the time, teaching English was considered a dodgy subject. English teachers in Romania were often considered to be spies because they could speak the language of the enemy.

"We were not allowed to speak the language to anyone except for our students, and if a rare American tourist had asked us for directions in the street, we were to respond in Romanian that we did not speak English."

All that changed in December of 1989, when a series of riots, known as the Romanian Revolution, led to the violent over-

throw of the Communist regime. The revolution breathed new democratic hope into a country that had long been stymied. "Metaphorically put, that [revolution] was the equivalent of a new sunrise in the lives of the Romanians," Ludovic said.

Prior to arriving in the U.S. in 1998, the Kovaliks had begun research in cognitive linguistics for their doctoral degrees. The novel subjects they chose were difficult to research in Romania, and they had all but exhausted their search for new sources before applying to graduate programs in the U.S.

"We just weren't able to retrieve enough sources for a doctorate's dissertation," Ludovic said. They came to America out of academic needs and not some romantic notion, Ludovic said.

"America offered me the opportunity to become a specialist in an area I was interested in, and that was cognitive linguistics," Doina said.

After both were accepted into the graduate program at Oklahoma State University, the Kovaliks left Romania for America, where their studies kept them very busy. "We didn't have any breaks for five



Photo by Eric Spencer

Ludovic and Doina Kovalik have taught at Winston-Salem State since 2004.

years," Doina said. During this period the Kovaliks completed master's and doctoral degrees—a monumental task, considering most students take three years to complete a master's degree and between five and six for a doctoral degree. In May 2004 they graduated from OSU.

"When we came here, we were not sure if we would be staying," Ludovic explained. "We didn't know if we would succeed or not."

However, by this time, the Kovaliks were deeply rooted in America, with a son who had just graduated from college himself and was about to get married. Ultimately, their decision to move to North Carolina was to find a place that had a low cost of living and wasn't too far from their son, who had landed a job in Cleveland, Ohio.

After moving to North Carolina, the Kovaliks landed teaching positions at

Surry Community College in Dobson, N.C. While they enjoyed working at SCC, they eventually felt the need to move on. The lack of research opportunities prompted them to search out new positions, eventually leading them to WSSU.

"They weren't encouraging us to do research in our interests. There is more opportunity for research here," Ludovic said.

## Beyonce won't cover up for Malaysian fans

Kai Beasley  
MCT WIRE SERVICE

Beyonce Knowles, the R&B singer known for flaunting her voluptuous curves, decided to cancel a concert in Kuala Lumpur, a city on the eastern border of Malaysia. To the disappointment of many Malaysian fans, the singer will instead perform Nov. 1 in Jakarta, a city in neighboring Indonesia, where the censorship laws aren't as stiff.

Although about 86 percent of the Indonesian population is Muslim, a figure greater than Malaysia's 60 percent, its regulations regarding dress and behavior are much less stringent.

Malaysia's censorship laws require that female performers cover themselves from the top of their chest to their knees including the shoulders.

Apparently this is where Beyonce draws the line. You can talk about her mother, you can criticize her acting abilities, you can even talk about her singing, but don't you dare ask her to wear clothes. But I suppose everyone has a limit. There's only so much a woman can take, right?

Malaysia has some of the strictest censorship laws in the world. It's known for closely following the strict values of Islam. In recent years, the Malaysian government has banned such TV shows as Fox's animated sitcom "Family Guy" and NBC's "Friends" (there has been speculation that they already knew that Ross and Rachel were going to get together at the end of the show, so they didn't

really miss anything).

They have also banned movies including Mel Gibson's "Passion of the Christ" (2004), Ang Lee's "Brokeback Mountain" (2006) and George Miller's "Babe: Pig in the City" (1998). I thought "Babe" should be banned also, but "Brokeback Mountain"? Come on.

Beyonce isn't the first singer to run into the brass knuckles of Malaysian censorship. In 2003, the American rock band, Linkin Park, was banned from wearing shorts, jumping up and down, or screaming during its concert. It was pretty much like going to a Wayne Newton concert sans the Las Vegas showgirls. In 2004, singer Mariah Carey was asked to

cover up as well, and in 2006, Malaysian concert organizers were fined for organizing a Pussycat Dolls concert and promoting indecent behavior ("Don't you wish your girlfriend was a freak like me" equals indecency).

Even Gwen Stefani made what she referred to as "a major sacrifice" this past August when she complied with Malaysian dress-code regulations during her concert at a stadium in Kuala Lumpur. Her decision to cover up came after student activists called for Stefani's concert to be canceled due to her sultry reputation.

Many protesters believe that the sexy dance moves, skimpy outfits and the "bootylicious" bodies of many of today's pop stars may corrupt Malaysia's youth. Indeed, Malaysia isn't ready for that jelly, and its lack of

readiness cost them one of the greatest spectacles in pop music.

There are a few things that we need to take from all this. First is that Beyonce should be invited to every party on every college campus in the country, because if this incident is any indication, she won't show up unless she's allowed to wear a skimpy outfit.

Second, if you ever have the opportunity to date Beyonce, or any woman who won't do anything unless she's allowed to be half naked, marry her!

All joking aside, I must say, I am a little confused by Beyonce's decision. I've heard of plenty of women not doing things because they didn't want to take their clothes off, but what woman doesn't do her job because she has to keep her clothes on? Some women even look better with their clothes on (Liza Minnelli for example).

It seems like backward thinking to me. And why cancel a concert over something so small? Having to be covered from chest to knees so that you can perform in front of thousands of people who appreciate your talent doesn't really seem like that big of a deal. I'd still go see Beyonce if she was completely covered up. As a matter of fact, I would see Beyonce any way I could... It's Beyonce!

At a time when sexual harassment lawsuits run rampant through the workplace — and Isaiah Thomas' office — Beyonce seemingly embraces being objectified. When singers like Diana Ross and former video vixens like Karrine Steffans denounce the sexual exploitation of women in music, Beyonce stands tall, and preferably half-naked in front of adoring fans.

Move over James Dean, Beyonce Knowles is the rebel for a new generation.



Photo courtesy of MCT Wire Service

Beyonce Knowles took "Dreamgirls" flash a little too far into reality with a gold dress plus shimmery skin.

### Opinion

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