

TOP SOVIET POET ARRIVES FOR TOUR

Voznesensky Plans to Read at Columbia and Hunter

By THEODORE SHABAD

One of the Soviet Union's outstanding young poets, Andrei Voznesensky, arrived here late Sunday for a poetry-reading tour of the United States.

The 32-year-old Mr. Voznesensky, a slender man with an easy smile, appeared tired at Kennedy International Airport after a day-long flight from Warsaw, where he had spent the night after leaving Moscow Saturday evening.

With virtually no advance notice of his arrival, the poet was welcomed by a group of Soviet newsmen and diplomats and by Elizabeth Kray, executive director of the Academy of American Poets, a nonprofit organization that is sponsoring the Russian's visit.

2 Readings Set Here

It is the first time that Mr. Voznesensky has come to the United States to read his own poetry. He was here in 1961 as a member of a Soviet writers' delegation. Last year he read poetry in Britain.

During his three-week stay Mr. Voznesensky is to appear before audiences at Columbia University and at Hunter College here, at the University of Chicago and at the Library of Congress in Washington. He will recite his works either in Russian only, as at Columbia today, or with English translations, as at a reading Thursday evening at Hunter.

Mr. Voznesensky said at the airport that he planned to read mainly from his collection, "Antiworlds," one of his best-known works for which he has been nominated for the 1966 Lenin Prize in literature, one of the Soviet Union's highest awards. Winners are to be announced on Lenin's birthday, April 22.

Among other poets nominated for the award this year was Yevgeny Yevtushenko, whose name has long been associated with that of Mr. Voznesensky despite differences between Mr. Yevtushenko's flamboyant, civic-minded approach and Mr. Voznesensky's quieter inward style.

Mr. Yevtushenko, who is now

in Australia on a poetry-reading tour, did not survive the first elimination round for the Lenin Prize. Mr. Voznesensky remained in the running.

Pointing up a subtle difference in present official attitudes toward the two poets, the Moscow newspaper Literaturnaya Gazeta, in a praiseful review of "Antiworlds" last week, supported Mr. Voznesensky's candidacy for the prize.

Alluding to Mr. Yevtushenko, the reviewer, Yevgeny Osetrov, complained that many critics, because of "inertness of thinking," still associated Mr. Voznesensky with representatives of the "noisy school" of poetry.

Poetry is usually difficult to translate, but Mr. Voznesensky's work poses particularly staggering problems because of his freewheeling use of the Russian language, from assonances and rhythms to sly juxtapositions of pompous expressions with far-out slang.

Influenced by Pasternak

The editors of a forthcoming English version of "Antiworlds" tackled the problem with the collaboration of six American poets, who worked from literal prose translations and metrical models, using their own poetic idiom to convey Mr. Voznesensky's thoughts.

A former student of architecture, Mr. Voznesensky rose to prominence in the last decade, influenced by Boris Pasternak in the early stages of his career. Mr. Voznesensky first published poems in 1958. He rose on the crest of a wave of renewed popularity of poetry in the early nineteen-sixties, when Soviet youngsters flocked by the thousands to poetry readings as they would to sports events.

As with other liberal-minded nonconformists who did not hew closely to the Communist party line, Mr. Voznesensky was a victim of Nikita S. Khrushchev crackdown on the arts in the winter of 1962-63, when the poet's experimental linguistic devices, now acclaimed as innovations, were attacked as "formalism."

Mr. Voznesensky replied to the charge in his poem "Evening on the Building Site," which contained the lines:

They nag me about formalism.
Experts, how far removed
You are from life! Formalin!
You smell of it, and of incense.
And in "Antiworlds" he wrote:
Ah, my critics; how I love them.
Upon the neck of the keenest
of them,
Fragrant and bald as
fresh-baked bread,
There shines a perfect
anti-head.