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RNO Scores a GRAMMY Win!

First Russian Orchestra Honored With the Coveted Award

The Russian National Orchestra recording of Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* and Jean-Pascal Beintus' *Wolf Tracks*, conducted by Kent Nagano, was the winner of a 2004 GRAMMY Award for Best Spoken Word Album for Children. The RNO is the first Russian orchestra ever to win the recording industry's highest honor.

The recording was conceived and commissioned by the RNO and benefits several charities. It features Sophia Loren narrating *Peter and the Wolf*, and a new piece, *Wolf Tracks*, narrated by Bill Clinton. Introductory remarks are provided by Mikhail Gorbachev.

RNO chief executive Sergei Markov said, "We are honored to have our work recognized by the Recording Academy's prestigious GRAMMY Award. This was a truly international endeavor and a model of the artistic collaboration that characterizes the RNO." Nagano, who served



The RNO's GRAMMY- winning CD features Sophia Loren narrating PETER AND THE WOLF, Bill Clinton narrating WOLF TRACKS, and introductory remarks by Mikhail Gorbachev

as artistic director of the project, said, "The entire team was extraordinary, tied together by the rare combination of creative vision and inspired artistry."

Released by PentaTone Classics on both standard and Super Audio CD formats, the recording was widely acclaimed. "Bill Clinton is a born communicator. He brings this exciting new piece of music to life," said *Classic FM* of the former President's telling of *Wolf Tracks*. Commenting on her rendition of *Peter and the Wolf*, the *Philadelphia Enquirer* said, "Sophia Loren can do no wrong in her take on the Prokofiev." Reviews have also lauded the orchestra and conductor: "The Russian National Orchestra and Kent Nagano play like angels." (*The Times*, London).

For more information and a link to purchase the CD, visit www.rno.ru.

RNO to Perform at Seville International Music Festival

This fall, the Russian National Orchestra and New York Philharmonic will be co-resident orchestras at the inaugural Seville International Music Festival, September 2 through 12.

The festival will bring together some of the leading stars of classical music. A highlight will be the outdoor presentation of the opera *Carmen*, on the actual historical sites central to Bizet's work. Between acts, audience

members will stroll between venues, sampling tapas and taking in the flavors of contemporary Seville.

The RNO's concerts will be conducted by Mikhail Pletnev, Mstislav Rostropovich and Carlo Ponti, Jr. A festival highlight will be the RNO's September 12 joint concert with the New York Philharmonic, conducted by Lorin Maazel, with Mikhail Pletnev on the piano. That same day, the festival

will conclude with a gala concert featuring Andrea Bocelli performing with the RNO.

The Russian Arts Foundation has designed a custom trip to Spain to include 3 days at the Festival and a visit to Madrid and Spain's wine regions. For information, please visit the RAF website at:

www.russianarts.org

RNO Winter US Tour Receives High Marks

The Russian National Orchestra toured the Eastern United States this winter, performing 9 concerts from Florida to New York. The tour was led by Alexander Vedernikov, Music Director of the Bolshoi Theatre and a member of the RNO Conductor Collegium. RNO Associate Conductor Dmitri Liss conducted the February 2 concert in Wilmington, Delaware. Acclaimed pianist H el ene Grimaud was the featured soloist for the tour.

The tour began in Florida on January 25 with a sold out concert at Sarasota's Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, and proceeded to three other Florida cities. "It's clear that the super-orchestra Pletnev formed in 1990 remains a remarkable machine," wrote the *South Florida Sentinel*. "The tensile brilliance of the strings, gleaming brass, and rich-toned winds attest to the turn-on-a-dime virtuosity in every section." The *Palm Beach Daily News* called the RNO performance "spell-binding from the opening gesture... Many orchestras come to the Kravis Center stage, but none is more musical or more disciplined than the Russian National Orchestra." The *Miami Herald* said, "This may be a young orchestra, but it is also a great one... [The



H el ene Grimaud



H el ene Grimaud, featured soloist of the RNO's Winter 2004 tour, and conductor Alexander Vedernikov in rehearsal with the orchestra

RNO] has become a living symbol of the best in Russian art amid the uncertainty and joy of creating democracy in Russia."

Vedernikov and Grimaud were praised for their collaboration with the RNO. The *South Florida Sentinel* called Vedernikov "consistently scrupulous," and *The Washington Post* said he

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“guided his troops through a [Shostakovich Fifth Symphony] of crystalline textures, with wind solos sounding in soft pastel tints and focused dynamics.” *The Washington Post* called Grimaud’s interpretation of Bartok’s Piano Concerto No. 3 “radiant.” *Music and Vision* said she displayed a “unique mastery” of the work and called it “one of the most dazzling pianistic displays in this or any music season.”

After Florida, the orchestra headed north for concerts in New Jersey, Delaware, Washington, DC and New York. Of the New Brunswick, NJ performance, the *Star Ledger* wrote, “Alexander Vedernikov... led a bristling evening of Russian works full of sound, fury and even a few sublime moments.”

On Super Bowl Sunday, the RNO performed to a packed house at the Kennedy Center. *The Washington Post* called it “a thrilling and commanding experience for the capacity audience.” President Bush offered the White House box at the



HRH Prince Michael of Kent, named RNO Royal Patron during the 2004 tour, with Thomas Ferguson, Chairman of the RAF Board of Directors, in the Kennedy Center White House Box



Prince Michael of Kent is presented with an honorary conductor's baton by RNO Chief Executive Sergei Markov

Kennedy Center for some of the dignitaries and members of the presidential administration in attendance.

While in Washington, the RNO Wind Quintet also performed a private concert at The Phillips Collection, an evening capped by the announcement of HRH Prince Michael of Kent GCVO as Royal Patron of the RNO.

Fluent in Russian (and related to Tsar Nicholas II through his grandmother), Prince Michael is actively involved with the

Russo-British Chamber of Commerce and several Russian charity, arts and humanitarian organizations. His international consulting company, of which he is chairman, encompasses numerous Russian business relationships.

Two dinners were held in Washington to honor Prince Michael as RNO Royal Patron, one hosted by British Ambassador Sir David Manning and Lady Catherine Manning, and the other by Mr. and Mrs. William A. Nitze. Dinners in Prince Michael’s honor were also held in Wilmington, hosted by Mr. and Mrs. Gerret van S. Copeland, and in New York, hosted by Mrs. Carroll Petrie.

The tour concluded February 3 with a concert at Carnegie Hall. The *New York Times* praised the RNO’s performance of Shostakovich’s 5th Symphony, saying that “specially notable was the Shostakovich Symphony’s slow movement, done with deep, straining yet beautifully prepared intensity.” *Classics Today* added, “[This] isn’t your father’s stereotypical Russian orchestra: the strings were warm but not overly thick and with plenty of bite, the brass forceful but without shrillness,... the percussion section fearlessly dynamic, the full orchestra sleekly polished, relishing powerful fortissimos without sounding raw.”

On February 4, the RNO returned to Moscow – but the tour continued for American audiences through rebroadcasts in all fifty states on National Public Radio’s Performance Today.

Grove Street Winery Summer Concert Series

Due to the generosity of Grove Street Winery, the Russian National Orchestra will once again present a summer concert series on the US West Coast in July 2004.

An exciting range of concerts is planned, including a performance of Gordon Getty’s *Joan and the Bells*, a concert with Chris Brubeck, featuring his *Trombone Concerto*, a concert of movie music and much more!

A listing of concert dates and locations is provided below. Dates are subject to change; for current information and

programs, please visit www.rno.ru. A limited number of complimentary tickets are available for RAF Firebird members. Contact the RAF for additional details: (1.802.223.8444; members@russianarts.org).

July 24 • Lake Tahoe, CA
July 28 • Santa Rosa, CA
July 30 • Napa, CA

July 25 • Berkeley, CA
July 29 • Murphys, CA
July 31 • Healdsburg, CA

August 1 • Saratoga, CA

Cruise the Volga with the RNO and Mikhail Pletnev

Join over 100 music lovers for a seven-day riverboat cruise down the Volga River

September 19-26, 2004

The Russian National Orchestra's annual tour of the Volga River region will feature concerts with RNO Founder and Artistic Director Mikhail Pletnev, both as conductor and soloist. The orchestra will also perform a children's outreach concert with a performance of Pulitzer Prize-winning composer John Corigliano's *The Pied Piper Fantasy*.

The tour opens in Nizhny Novgorod on September 19 with a gala concert in the city's Kremlin Concert Hall. After the performance, musicians and guests will board the 440-foot cruise ship Georgy Zhukov, which will set sail on the Volga River that evening.

Tour stops include Kazan, Togliatti, Samara and Saratov. In each city, guests will enjoy a concert, guided tours and specially-catered meals. Guests and musicians will socialize together throughout the cruise in intimate social gatherings, over meals and after concerts. Receptions and events with civic leaders and the public are planned in several cities. There will also be special wine tastings and dinners on board.



The Georgy Zhukov is a four-story cruise ship outfitted with the latest navigational equipment and can reach speeds of up to 26 km/h. It carries up to 335 passengers in one-, two- and three-person air-conditioned cabins. The ship has two restaurants, two bars, a conference hall, library, sun room, laundry, souvenir shop, and a doctor on board.

Participants have the option of traveling to Nizhny Novgorod via a direct Lufthansa flight from Frankfurt (returning to Frankfurt from Samara September 27 on a direct Lufthansa flight), or taking a flight from Moscow to Nizhny Novgorod on September 19 (returning to Moscow from Samara on September 27). Optional activities in Moscow are being arranged for guests.

The tour price is \$2950 per person, based on double occupancy. The single supplement is \$500. Price includes accommodations on the cruise ship Georgy Zhukov, all meals, prime seating at concerts and special events, and excursions. Airfare is not included. Price includes a \$750 contribution to the Russian Arts Foundation, tax deductible in the US.

For more information about this unique opportunity, contact the Russian Arts Foundation at 1.802.223.8444 or by email, members@russianarts.org.

Set sail down the Volga River with the musicians and friends of the RNO

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