

# RAF NEWS

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## Embassy Event Unites US & Russian Brass



The RNO Brass Quintet and US Army Band Quintet  
with Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak.

ON MARCH 17, BEFORE AN AUDIENCE of some 220 invited guests, brass quintets from the United States Army Band and the Russian National Orchestra joined in an unprecedented event at the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Washington, DC. The 10 musicians had been brought together to perform music from the private collections of Tsars Alexander III and Nicholas II, much of which is believed to have been played only in the private company of the Russian royal family and the tsar's entourage. The works are contained in a Library of Congress collection known as "The Czar's Library."

The Library of Congress bought the original manuscripts in the early 1930s, when the library was trying to expand its foreign holdings. The library's full Russian Imperial Collection contains books, jewelry, religious artifacts and artwork from five of the tsar's palaces in the St. Petersburg area, in addition to the musical manuscripts.

Kevin LaVine of the Library of Congress's music division said the beauty of the manuscripts is that they provide a look at the cultural life of the Russian royal family in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The artwork on the manuscripts represents the artwork that was popular at the time, and the music, which was

### Save the Dates: 20th Anniversary Tour

Mark your calendars for the Russian National Orchestra's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary World Tour, which comes to the US in February-March 2010. The schedule includes concerts and gala events on the west coast and Midwest, ending with performances in Florida and the orchestra's annual residency at Festival of the Arts BOCA. The west coast concerts will be conducted by RNO founder and music director Mikhail Pletnev, and then guest conductor Patrick Summers picks up the baton for the other tour concerts. Soloists include Tchaikovsky Competition winner Sergey Antonov, soprano Lisa Delan, violinist Stefan Jackiw and pianist Yuja Wang.

For the latest news on the tour, with venues and full program listings as they become available, visit [www.mo.ru](http://www.mo.ru), and be sure to subscribe to the RNO's email newsletter. For more information, visit:

[www.russianarts.org](http://www.russianarts.org)

popular among Russian aristocrats, even hints at some of the royal family's private hobbies.

"You see a lot of piano solos, or piano and vocal duets," LaVine said. "So these were likely arrangements made for the imperial family to perform at home."

Vladislav Lavrik, principal trumpet player for the Russian National Orchestra, said the concert was a very special occasion

"These musicians are providing for us not only music, but they share something with us that isn't known, even by those who closely follow and study the evolution of music," he said.

The ambassador added that the tone of relations between America and Russia is changing, and that joint efforts like this concert help to establish that tone.

Blair A. Ruble, director of the Kennan

farmers in the Ukraine, also arranged by Rubtsov.

"That piece represents so much about Russia," Lavrik said. "As a Russian, you feel connected to that music, because it's about you and your family and your history."

The bands concluded the night with encores of Duke Ellington's *Caravan* and a salsa rendition of Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's famous *Flight of the Bumblebee*.

## ***"Tonight shows the capacity of Russia and the United States, when working together, to bring beauty to the world..."***

for him because the music represents such a significant time in Russia's history.

"This music is part of our culture," he said. "It's an honor to get to be the first people to play it for an audience."

"It was quite a treat to take part in this," said Sergeant Major Dennis Edelbrock, a trumpeter in The U.S. Army Band Quintet. "It's been a lot of hard work in a short time, but those guys are pros and I feel good about how we played."

Lead patron for the event was Martha Cantillon Bredon, whose grandfather was principal trumpet of the Cleveland Orchestra. Ms. Bredon also seeks to revive her grandfather's work in music therapy. He created a method of teaching trumpet to people with physical disabilities, which musicians of the Russian National Orchestra Brass Quintet will apply in partnership with doctors and physical therapists in the United States and Russia.

\* \* \*

The bands met only the day before at Brucker Hall on Fort Myer, VA, to rehearse their collaborative pieces and get to know each other. But within minutes of meeting, the two groups were playing as if they'd had weeks of practice time, despite any language barriers.

"Those Army guys, they're very professional," Lavrik said.

Sergey I. Kislyak, the Russian ambassador to the United States, opened the concert with an introduction of the groups and the international friendship the joint performance represented. He said the importance of the night was not only to hear good music, but also to take a lesson in history.



Ambassador Sergey Kislyak

Institute, which focuses on Russian studies, said the concert illustrates the strengths of both nations and the power they have when cooperating.

"Tonight shows the capacity of Russia and the United States, when working together, to bring beauty to the world," Ruble said. "This is not a symbolic 'new start.' This is our example of what things have become: a normal relationship. If we should celebrate anything tonight, we should celebrate how normal things have become between us."

The concert opened with "Quintet," written by composer Alexander Aliab'ev.

Both full quintets joined on *Suite from the Czar's Library*, selections from the Library of Congress's collection arranged by Andrey Rubtsov of the Russian National Orchestra, and Anton Rubinstein's *Rossiya*, a musical glimpse at the many facets of Russian culture, from aristocrats and city life to poor



Vladislav Lavrik

Both featured virtuosic solos by Army Band trombonist Sergeant First Class Harry Watters, who gave *Bumblebee* a new tone with his fluid trombone runs.

After the concert, the members of both bands said they are ready to continue their collaboration. "There has been talk of bringing the joint performance to Moscow," said Mary Ann Allin, an American liaison for the Russian National Orchestra and the organizer of the joint concert. "Stay tuned."

"We'd like to support this fantastic partnership," Colonel Thomas Rotondi Jr., leader and commander of The U. S. Army Band, known as "Pershing's Own." "To have two countries come together to perform works like this, it's the best way to do it. This is a great event to bring these two communities together."

*Compiled from stories published in The Gazette (Library of Congress), April 3, 2009, v. 20, no. 11, p. 1, 5 (by Jennifer Gavin) and Pentagram, March 20, 2009, Fort Myer, VA, (by Ian Graham). Photos by Sergei Voinov.*

# Quintet Premieres *Three Moods*

ON THE DARKENED STAGE of Middle Collegiate Church in New York City on March 18, the Russian National Orchestra Wind Quintet took their places for the premiere performance of Andrey Rubtsov's *Three Moods*. Written for his friends in the RNO, Andrey's composition had been played many times on other stages, but never before in a public concert in New York.

The March concert, organized by Classical Action/AIDS and Dancers Responding to AIDS, had opened with a dramatic sequence of solo flute music accompanying contemporary dancer Germaul Barnes, who entered the church in a flowing white robe that, along with dramatic lighting, cast a mystical glow enhancing the beauty of the church's Tiffany windows.

The Broadway-based AIDS charities had erected a custom-built stage and installed state-of-the-art lighting for the benefit production. Then as the RNOWQ took their places a sudden crash broke the silence of the darkened church.

No one except members of the quintet

knew what had happened, yet within seconds the first ethereal notes of Rubtsov's first movement seemed to signal that only a minor misstep had occurred. An adventurous program of music and dance unfolded without further episode—featuring the RNO Wind Quintet, soloist Maxim Rubtsov, dancer Germaul Barnes and the astonishing young organist Cameron Carpenter.

Only after the concert did we learn that the bottom part of Alexey Sizov's bassoon had slipped off and crashed to the floor, causing irreparable damage. Somehow he could play the instrument, and somehow the show went on.

As it turns out, Sizov has been waiting for a new bassoon for four years. A German instrument maker has been crafting a bassoon specifically designed to fit Sizov's hands. But the New York incident has accelerated the need. To help the RNO acquire this bassoon, please consider making a donation to the RNO Instrument Fund. For more information, contact Mary Ann Allin at:

maryannallin@russianarts.org

## Golden Autumn in Moscow The RNO Festival at the Bolshoi Theater September 7-13, 2009

The RNO debuts its own music festival in Moscow this fall, at the Bolshoi Theater. RNO Founder and Principal Conductor Mikhail Pletnev will lead seven concerts over seven evenings. Programs feature British clarinetist Michael Collins, pianist Stephen Hough, the Moscow Academy of Choral Art, American piano prodigy Conrad Tao in his Russian debut, and new choreography by ballet great Vladimir Vasiljev of composer Gordon Getty's *Ancestor Suite* – all accompanied by the incomparable RNO.

Tickets to individual concerts will be available through Moscow-based parter.ru (ph. 495-258-0000) and **kontramarka.ru** (phone 495-933-3200) and full program listings are now available on the **rno.ru** website.

A premier travel opportunity combines these extraordinary concerts with opulent meals in palaces, exclusive clubs and restaurants, private tours to the Kremlin, Tretyakov Gallery, Pushkin Museum, Mosfilm and Ostankino Palace and other Moscow sites. The tour kicks off with a gala dinner at Spencer House in London on September 7.

For patron trip information and reservations, please contact Martha Bredon • 415.421.7137 • mbredon@pacbell.net

### Rubtsov to Visit Five States

Maxim Rubtsov, Principal Flutist of the Russian National Orchestra, will tour the United States from September 15 to October 10, 2009, presenting seldom-heard compositions by composers Alfred Schnittke and Nikolai Platonov, and premiering Andrey Rubtsov's *Divertimento in E Major* for Flute and Piano.

In concerts that will include music for flute and organ, as well as solo flute and contemporary dance, Rubtsov will demonstrate his distinct virtuosity as a solo performer, and also lead master classes and workshops. For concert times and locations, visit **rno.ru**

## Acclaim for Recent RNO Releases



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*Audiophile Audition*

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*SA-CD.net*

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"...inspired readings... an absolute must-have for any respectable audiophile."  
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"...Jaw-dropping. Inspiring. Riveting. Astonishing."  
*Fulvue Drive-In*

To order these or other RNO recordings, visit: **rno.ru**

# Wolf Visits Hospital to Benefit Children

ON MARCH 18, the Wintergarden of New York-Presbyterian Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital buzzed with excitement as classes from nearby public schools took their seats for a performance of Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*. The concert, performed by the award-winning Wind Quintet of the Russian National Orchestra, was unique in many ways.

As usually happens in the Wintergarden Programming Series, the concert was broadcast live on the hospital's in-house getwell@network to those children unable to leave their hospital beds. The cameraman and sound engineer checked the microphones and cables to be sure their systems were ready prior to the arrival of the wolf ambassador.

if anything happened, medical care would be close at hand. The wolf moved silently around the room, pacing constantly at the end of a leash held by a Wolf Center expert, who explained, "I am following Atka, not leading him." With his heightened sense of smell the wolf, she added, was curious about this unusual place and all the people in the room. The



PHOTOS: CHARLES MANLEY

From left: RNO Wind Quintet with event organizer and member of the RAF International Board of Directors, Marianne Wyman, and *Peter and the Wolf* narrator Gregg Whiteside. Atka the grey wolf. Children in frozen admiration of the elegant Atka.

The star attraction was an Arctic gray wolf named Atka, a resident of the Wolf Conservation Center located in Salem, New York.

The Moscow musicians were presenting the world premiere of a new arrangement of the classic tale that introduces children to various instruments of a symphony orchestra. On this occasion they had prepared a new finale – a full-throated wolf howl, which they would teach the children.

In the pre-concert rehearsal, Gregg Whiteside, the esteemed radio host of many classical music programs, asked for a few changes in the script that were hastily penciled into the narrator's script and the musicians' scores.

As the room filled with school children and teachers, children in wheelchairs, nurses, parents and curious hospital workers, a representative of the Wolf Conservation Center explained what behavior the children could expect from the live wolf and what behavior the wolf would expect from the children—no touching, no loud noises, no sudden movements. This was, after all, an encounter with a wild animal that had been raised in captivity at the Wolf Center since birth.

The wolf's appearance in the concert hall was greeted with barely contained excitement and apprehension, including on the part of the visiting musicians, who had reassured each other in advance that

children sat in frozen admiration as the elegant wolf passed near them, its golden eyes searching to comprehend the alien scene. Defying hospital standards of cleanliness, the wolf decided to mark his territory in one corner of the room, which the handlers described as normal wolf behavior.

The wolf's 15-minute walk-about stimulated a brisk question and answer session among the children and the wolf experts from Salem. Then Mr. Whiteside, the narrator of *Peter and the Wolf* deftly segued to the musical program with the question, "Are you sitting comfortably? Then I'll begin..."



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