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RUSSIAN CHAMBER CHORUS OF NEW YORK

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THE RUSSIAN CHAMBER CHORUS OF NEW YORK TRANSCENDS NATIONAL BOUNDARIES WITH CHORAL GEMS FROM ESTONIA, LATVIA, LITHUANIA, AND RUSSIA

New York City, June 1, 2016— **The Russian Chamber Chorus of New York, Nikolai Kachanov, Conductor**, will present its third concert in the series, *Russia and its Neighbors*. Acclaimed for its performances of well-known and rarely-performed Russian choral works, RCCNY displays its broader scope by **celebrating choral traditions of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Russia** with contemporary music from these countries.

Two performances in Manhattan: Wednesday, June 1, 2016, 7:30 pm, at The Brick Presbyterian Church, 1140 Park Avenue at 91st Street, and on **Sunday, June 5, 2016, 4:00pm**, at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Central Park West at W. 65th Street.

Tickets are \$25 at the door, \$20 for students and seniors 65+. For additional information, visit www.rccny.org or call (212) 928-1402.

The first part of the program is dedicated to music from three Baltic countries. It starts with “Salve Regina” for choir and organ by Arvo Pärt (b.1935), a famous composer from Estonia. Widely known for his minimalistic purity, Pärt opened a window into a world of spirituality. From Latvia, RCCNY performs “Madrigal” by Peteris Vasks (b.1946), a leading Latvian composer. In this work, Vasks combines advanced choral technique with the principals of early Western polyphony. From Lithuania comes “The Great Mystery” by Feliksas Bajoras (b. 1934), a powerful choral gem rooted in the ancient tradition of Lithuanian music and inspired by a poem from Lithuanian priest Jonas Zukauskas.

The second half of the concert is dedicated to music by Russian composer Yuri Yukechev (b.1946). The choir will perform “By Candlelight,” a six-part cantata for mixed chorus with soprano solo that was given its American premiere by the Russian Chamber Chorus of New York in 1995. The movements of the cantata were set to verses by various poets and correspond to the seasons of the year; after the Prologue, childhood begins with Winter, progresses through youth/Spring, adulthood/Summer and old age/Autumn, followed by an Epilogue. The program will also include Yukechev’s “Beauty” set to a poem by Omar Khayyam.

Mary Ellen Callahan, soprano; Guy Brewer, organ.

About the Chorus:

The Russian Chamber Chorus of New York was founded in 1984 by Artistic Director Nikolai Kachanov. Over the course of 31 years, the 32-member chorus has become America’s preeminent Russian vocal ensemble and one of the world’s greatest ambassadors of the Russian

creative spirit. Known for its stylistic versatility, richness of sound, and subtlety of expression, RCCNY commands a wide repertoire, from ancient liturgical chants to world premieres by leading contemporary composers.

RCCNY has performed at Carnegie Hall in the American premiere of Sergei Taneyev's opera *Agamemnon* with the Manhattan Philharmonic under Peter Tiboris, and the Aquila Theatre Company featuring Olympia Dukakis; with the Czech Philharmonic under Vladimir Ashkenazy; with the Moscow Virtuosi under Vladimir Spivakov; and has participated in the American premiere of Mikis Theodorakis' opera *Electra* and in Mahler's *Symphony No. 2* with the Kirov Orchestra under Valery Gergiev. In June 2008, RCCNY appeared in a performance of Prokofiev's cantata *Alexander Nevsky* with the St. Petersburg Philharmonic, under the direction of Yuri Temirkanov.

RCCNY was profiled in Moscow's prestigious *Melodiya* magazine and in a publication of Moscow's P.I. Tchaikovsky Conservatory. The group's several CDs include Tchaikovsky's *Liturgy and Vespers*. Tchaikovsky's *Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom* was chosen by *The New York Times* among the top 10 classical CDs of 2001.

The chorus has appeared on the nationally acclaimed NPR radio program *A Prairie Home Companion* with Garrison Keillor. Russian Chamber Chorus performances of contemporary music have been hailed by critics: James Oestreich (*The New York Times*) called the chorus's "superbly prepared cantata performances" of music by Yuri Yukechev "extraordinary; richly imagined and deftly realized." Subsequently, First Art, a radio program devoted to choral music, aired Yukechev's *My Heart is Ready* across the United States. Performances by RCCNY have been featured on *New Sounds* with John Schaefer and *Around New York* with Fred Child (WNYC-FM).

Nikolai Kachanov

Founder and Artistic Director of the Russian Chamber Chorus of New York, Nikolai Kachanov was born in Russia in the Siberian city of Barnaul, capital of the Altai Region. He holds a Ph.D. in choral conducting from the Novosibirsk Conservatory and completed post-doctoral studies at the Moscow Conservatory. In 1981, Maestro Kachanov moved to the United States with his wife, Tamara, and their son Pavel. In 1984, Nikolai and Tamara founded the Russian Chamber Chorus of New York. Kachanov is devoted to presenting new and underexposed works that illustrate Russia's rich heritage and its contemporary spirit. As a result of his commitment, audiences have been introduced to the ancient chants previously banned in his homeland (and completely unknown in America). Kachanov created the Ussachevsky Festival of Russian-American contemporary music, held at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. Kachanov has prepared large concert choruses for Vladimir Ashkenazy, Leon Botstein, Valery Gergiev, Yuri Temirkanov, and Peter Tiboris; and he participated as a coach in the 2004 Lincoln Center Festival's U.S. premiere of John Tavener's all-night vigil, *The Veil of the Temple*. Kachanov has been interviewed by Fred Child for NPR's *From the Village to the Concert*.

Web site: rccny.org

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