

PETROUSHKA BALL

2020



MOZART

Così fan tutte

FEB 15–MAR 14

The Met's boisterous Coney Island vision for Mozart's classic comedy—complete with sideshow sword swallows and snake charmers—returns with an extraordinary ensemble cast, including mezzo-soprano Serena Malfi and tenor Ben Bliss, under the baton of Harry Bicket.

Tickets start at \$25 [metopera.org](https://www.metopera.org) 212.362.6000

PHOTO: JONATHAN TICHLER/MET OPERA

The Met ropolitan Opera

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JEANETTE LERMAN-NEUBAUER MUSIC DIRECTOR



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

February 7, 2020

Dear Friends:

I am delighted to join the Russian Children's Welfare Society in welcoming everyone to its 55th Annual Petroushka Ball.

New York City owes its dynamism and singularity to generations of diverse residents whose commitment to building a better world has strengthened communities throughout the five boroughs and far beyond. Since 1926, the Russian Children's Welfare Society has embodied our city's values of compassion and equity, equipping underserved children in Russia with college scholarships, medical treatment, rehabilitation programs, orphanage assistance, and much more to help them reach their fullest potential. Tonight's event will further enable RCWS to lift the floor for young people across the world, and I applaud all those in attendance for their work to build a brighter, fairer future for the next generation. I look forward to all that this outstanding organization will accomplish in the years ahead.

On behalf of the City of New York, please accept my best wishes for a memorable ball and continued success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill de Blasio".

Bill de Blasio
Mayor

**Генеральное консульство
Российской Федерации
в Нью-Йорке**
9 East 91st Street, New York, NY 10128



**Consulate General
of the Russian Federation
in New York**
Tel.: (212) 534-3782 Fax: (212) 831-9162

February 7, 2020

Dear Friends,

It is my pleasure to welcome you all on the occasion of the 55th Annual Petroushka Ball hosted by the Russian Children's Welfare Society (RCWS).

We are most grateful to the dedicated work of the Society assisting thousands of children in need. For over 94 years the RCWS has been helping children in crisis. Over the last twenty years, the Society refocused all its programs on children and children's organizations in Russia, assisting orphanages, pediatric hospitals, rehabilitation centers and schools.

The success of any charitable organization depends on the commitment and dedication of those who often go unnoticed. We would like to express our deepest appreciation to each member of the RCWS team and volunteers in Moscow, New York and San Francisco. I would also like to thank generous sponsors, donors and patrons who provide the on-going support to the RCWS and the Annual Petroushka Ball. Without your valuable support and contributions, this worthwhile cause could not succeed.

On behalf of the Consulate General of the Russian Federation in New York, I wish continued success to the Russian Children's Welfare Society in its noble mission. I also wish an enjoyable and memorable evening to all the guests who gathered tonight for this traditional Russian Ball.

Sergei K. Ovsianikov
Consul General

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Ovsianikov', written over the printed name.



The 55th Annual
Petroushka Ball



February 7th, 2020 • The Plaza Hotel • New York City

To Benefit the
Russian Children's Welfare Society

Dear Guests,

Welcome to this the 55th Anniversary of the Petroushka Ball.

The Petroushka Ball began 55 years ago, in 1965 at the Delmonico Hotel. At that time, it was just a dance, no dinner was served, but we did have a live orchestra. Word got around to the Russian community and, at \$8.00 a ticket, we became the most popular party in New York. That first Ball was very crowded – the hotel had to keep adding tables to the dance floor and the floor became the size of a postage stamp. The very next year we moved to the Plaza Hotel and dinner, which was a hotel requirement. That is also when we introduced entertainment; and what entertainment we've had and still do have! Stars from the Metropolitan Opera, the Ballet, pianists, not to mention the outstanding Russian musicians.

These many years have seen generations of guests enjoying themselves on the dance floor – parents and grandparents, myself included. The RCWS is happy to preserve the Petroushka Ball as something of elegance and a treasury of Russian culture with the benefits of the modern world, of which our handheld card readers are just one example. I'm sure there are guests here this evening who have been to the Ball many times; for them, and for all our guests, including those who will come sometime in the future, we must keep all the traditions and the elegance in place.

I wish the new guests among us a most joyful evening, one they will remember and want relive from year to year.

Please remember that you are all really here for the children who need your support – support that gives them hope, help, and healing, and lets them know that someone in this world cares about them. Your donations accomplish so much...

Through education not just of the little ones but also through our college program in which over 173 students are presently enrolled. Through medicine by repairing facial deformities and other physical ailments. Through support for orphanages and schools by supplying beds, new windows, school buses, farm equipment, classroom equipment, washing machines, and a host of other basic needs. Through our annual Christmas and New Year (Yelka) party for over one thousand children that is held every year at large theaters in Moscow. Every year Father Frost (Ded Moroz) and the Snow Maiden (Snegourochka) are there at the theater and also visit hospitals to distribute gifts to the young patients.

The Russian Children Welfare Society has taken care of thousands of disadvantaged children since 1926. With contributions from generous donors and our Ball guests, we hope to continue for many years to come. If you would like to learn more about the work we do please feel free to contact our New York office at main@rcws.org. If you are in Moscow, our office there can be reached at rcwsmoscow@gmail.com.

Wishing you good health and happiness for the year ahead.

Beatrice M. Fekula

President of the RCWS



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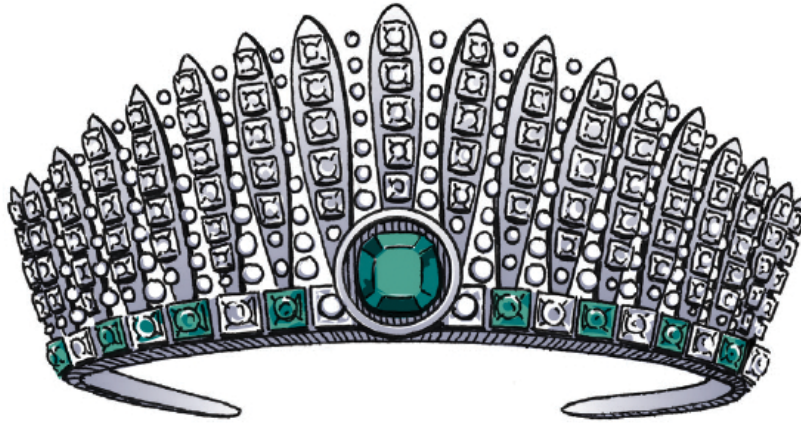
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THE TIARA

The tiara – a semi-circular or circular band, usually of precious metal, decorated with jewels – is the theme of this year's Petroushka Ball.

Tiaras harken back to the head ornaments worn by ancient men and women to denote their high status in society. The word 'tiara' is Persian in origin; the name first described the high-peaked head-dresses of Persian kings, which were encircled by diadems (bands of purple and white decoration). Ancient Greeks and Romans used gold to make wreath-shaped head ornaments, while Scythian tiaras resembled a stiff halo that would serve as the inspiration for later Russian 'kokoshniki' (*кокошник*). The use of tiaras and diadems declined along with the decline of the Roman Empire.

In the late 18th century, Neoclassicism gave rise to a revival of tiaras, but this time it was a solely female adornment. Jewelers taking inspiration from Ancient Greece and Rome created new wreaths made from precious gemstones. Napoleon and his wife Joséphine de Beauharnais are credited with popularizing tiaras along with the new Empire style.

Queen Elizabeth II is said to have the largest and most valuable collection of tiaras in the world and she is often seen wearing them on state occasions. The Queen inherited many of them, especially from Queen Alexandra, wife of King Edward VII and sister of Russian Empress Maria Feodorovna, wife of Tsar Alexander III. One of the most exquisite of Queen Alexandra's tiaras is her "Kokoshnik" tiara of 1888. The shape is based on the traditional Russian 'kokoshnik' headdress that became popular as a style of tiara in Western Europe in the late nineteenth century. The perfect matching of the diamonds in each of the 61 bars that form the tiara required tremendous skill by the craftsmen at Garrard's, the jeweler that created the piece.

Queen Elizabeth's favorite tiara is the Grand Duchess Vladimir tiara, purchased in the 1920s by Queen Mary, wife of King George V. Consisting of numerous interlocking diamond circles inside which pearl drops or emeralds can be attached, it belonged originally to Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna, wife of Grand Duke Vladimir, younger brother of Tsar Alexander III. After the Revolution of 1917, Maria Pavlovna moved from St. Petersburg to the countryside but not before hiding the tiara and her other jewels in a secret compartment in the Vladimir Palace where she lived. She arranged for a British officer disguised as a worker to sneak into the palace and smuggle her jewels to England. Maria Pavlovna fled to Venice in 1920, thus becoming the last Romanov to leave Russian soil.

Other queens, empresses, and princesses regularly wear tiaras at formal evening occasions. The Swedish Royal Family have a magnificent collection as do the Danish, the Dutch, and Spanish monarchies. The Romanov dynasty had a superb collection.

As one might expect, there is tradition and etiquette surrounding the wearing of tiaras. They are worn only by married women, and, with one exception, only after 5pm. The only time tiaras may be worn during the day is at royal weddings. It's interesting to note that in Russia, kokoshniki were also worn only by married women. Further, tiaras are worn on limited occasions of great significance, such as state visits, inaugurations and coronations, balls and royal dinners. In the past, invitations to full evening dress occasions would sometimes feature the magnificently evocative pronouncement, "Tiaras will be worn."



Russian Children's Welfare Society, Inc.

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but a lifetime is not enough for music.”*

-SERGEI RACHMANINOFF

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Perfume through the eras



CLIVE CHRISTIAN



About the Society



This year, the Russian Children's Welfare Society proudly celebrates the 94th Anniversary of its founding and the 55th Anniversary of the Petroushka Ball. In the spring of 1926, the original organizers pledged their commitment to improving the lives of Russian children living outside the Soviet Union.

The direction of the Russian Children's Welfare Society's many initiatives had been guided to a great extent by the unending political and social flux of the 20th century. The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 prompted the migration of large numbers of Russians to Western Europe, Asia, and North and South America. By the early thirties, the Society had ten branches operating throughout the United States and was sending money and material assistance to schools and organizations in locales as diverse as Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Finland, France, Germany, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Harbin, Shanghai, and Istanbul.

RCWS gained recognition from the Presidential War Relief Control Board as an approved charity for work abroad during the Second World War. By 1950, the Society was again sending relief to 14 countries.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia's infrastructure left an alarming number of children disenfranchised. Given this reality, and, given that Europe and North and South America had become self-sufficient, RCWS shifted its focus to assisting children at risk living in Russia. The Russian Children's Welfare Society now directs all of its yearly aid to children in Russia by funding an array of projects that include medical programs, college scholarships for orphans, schools and orphanages, and rehabilitation centers for children with special needs.

A SELECTION OF INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN BY THE RCWS IN 2019 THANKS TO THE KIND SUPPORT OF OUR DONORS:

MEDICAL PROGRAMS

"GIVE BEAUTY BACK TO THE CHILDREN"- PEDIATRIC MAXILLOFACIAL SURGERY FUND

Thousands of Russian children are burdened by unsightly facial deformities as a result of congenital defects, tumors, cleft lips, cleft palates, and other traumas. Only several hospitals in all of Russia have specialized surgeons to undertake cases that often require a series of surgeries and highly advanced medical technology. Consequently, treatment is often a luxury few families have access to even when it is a dire necessity for a child's physical and psychological well-being.



Nikita before



After

In 2010, RCWS launched "Give Beauty Back to the Children," in partnership with Professor Vitaly Roginsky, Head of the Moscow Center for Maxillofacial Surgery (MCMS) and Lev Ambinder, Head of the Russian Aid Foundation (Rusfond). MCMS is one of the most innovative facilities in Russia providing treatment and rehabilitation for children with facial deformities.

Thanks to the joint efforts of Rusfond, MCMS and RCWS, the "Give Beauty Back to the Children" program has forever altered the lives of over 2,200 children suffering from facial deformities. The average cost per surgery is in the range of \$2,500-\$5,000. Thanks to our mutual donors' support and the help of advanced medical micro technology, Professor Roginsky and his staff have witnessed many of their patients' personalities flourish with hope and happiness as they gain the ability to do what is second nature to most – to smile.

Sechenov Medical Academy, Department of Pediatrics, Moscow

The Sechenov Medical Academy is one of the oldest and best-recognized hospitals in Russia. Built in 1891 to treat abandoned children in Moscow, it is a teaching center for medical students and provides free medical treatment for patients from throughout Russia. The Pediatric Department is a multi-profile department with 250 in-patient beds and an outpatient capability providing medical help to children up to 18 years of age with systemic ailments of conjunctive tissues and arthritis. In 2019, RCWS awarded \$10,000 to cover highly-needed new lab reagents to aid in early diagnosis and treatment, allowing Sechenov Medical Academy to provide improved medical care to over 200 of its young patients.

Charitable foundation to assist sick and abandoned children

"Deti.Msk.Ru", Moscow

The organization assists the Russian Children's Clinical Hospital. One of the fund's areas of activity is the "House of Hope," the first and only free home-hotel for ill children and their families where they can live after being discharged from the hospital while still requiring outpatient treatment. "House of Hope" had to close because its heating system was not functional. In 2019, RCWS provided \$11,994 to replace the heating system, benefiting 70 recuperating children and their families annually.

EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS AND PROGRAMS

During the sixteen years since the inception of the RCWS scholarship program, the number of participants has grown from 3 in the 2003-2004 academic year to over 150 in 2018-2019. Currently, RCWS is supporting 173 students in the Pskov, Yaroslavl, Moscow and the North Caucasus regions. To date, the scholarship program has been enormously successful in providing a support structure for students as they transition from living in an orphanage to attending a university on their own. For an annual cost of approximately \$2,000 per student, the Society is helping orphans successfully complete an academic degree or vocational training in order to steer them in the direction of a promising future. RCWS requires academic transcripts from each scholarship recipient, as well as reports on the use of the stipend to assure accountability. Over 120 of RCWS scholarship recipients have thus far completed their schooling and found employment. This is an outstanding achievement of which we are very proud.

We would like to share several stories. Among our new scholarship recipients are:



About the Society



Eduard T., a 19-year-old orphan raised in the Pechora Orphanage in the Pskov region. Currently, Eduard attends the Pechora College of Professional Technologies and Service to receive a Diploma in Vehicle Mechanics. He is planning to continue his education in the field of aviation and engineering at Moscow's Bauman University or Moscow Aviation University. RCWS's monthly scholarship is a big help for Eduard.

Aleksandra Y., 20 years old, is an orphan and has no relatives. She is a student at the Pskov Pedagogical University with a major in Physics and Mathematics. Aleksandra's dream is to become a math teacher.

Nestor S., 17 years old, was born and remains blind. Nestor is a pianist and a composer but his family cannot support him financially because his father is suffering from cancer and his mother is unable to work. Despite his physical limitations, Nestor, who is also fluent in English and Arabic, graduated from secondary school with a gold medal and is now a 1st year student at Moscow's prestigious College of Brass Art, performing in a jazz band and participating in numerous international music competitions. His dream is to own a piano and to continue his music studies.

Maria V., 17 years old, became a social orphan after her parents lost their parental rights. At the age of 8 Maria was brought to the Solba Orphanage in the Yaroslavl region, where she blossomed and developed her artistic talents. At Solba Maria learned different drawing techniques, which sharpened her artistic skills and helped to boost her creativity. Last summer, she passed the exams and was accepted to the College of Architecture in Krasnodar to study graphic design. RCWS's scholarship has allowed her to purchase necessary books, equipment & art supplies so she can pursue her dream.



RCWS has been expanding the scholarship program, adding new partners and increasing the number of participants. Currently, RCWS provides scholarships to 22 young musicians affiliated with the Spivakov Foundation, established by renowned concert violinist Vladimir Spivakov, to help disadvantaged children in Russia develop their musical and artistic talent.

ORPHANAGES

OPOCHKA ORPHANAGE, PSKOV CHILDREN'S FUND, PSKOV REGION

In 2019, RCWS provided \$7,600 to OPOCHKA Orphanage to help fund "Steps to a future profession," a project that aims to create opportunities for children's vocational training and socialization. RCWS's grant allows the orphanage to obtain tools and equipment crucial for creating the vocational training workshops that will prepare 130 children for future independent life, help them find employment, and teach them to provide for themselves and their future families.

NIKOLO-SOLBINSKY ORPHANAGE (SOLBA), YAROSLAVL REGION

Currently, 95 girls (from 6 months to 18 years of age) reside at the Solba Orphanage and this number continues to grow. The Solba, whose mission is to inspire and educate a rising generation of women to be spiritually and physically healthy and contribute to society, has governmental accreditation and is widely admired for its extensive arts program.



In 2019, RCWS provided two grants to Solba totaling \$31,500 to fund electricity, gas, art supplies, books, and embroidery equipment including supplies and specialized computer software. The students were trained in the computer-aided design process and are now able to design unique embroidered pieces that they can sell to generate income to support the orphanage.

PERVOMAISKI ORPHANAGE FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS,

KOSTROMA REGION

Pervomaiski the only orphanage in the Kostroma region for children with special needs and currently houses and provides education to 83 children ages 4 to 18. The children there have serious mental and/or physical disabilities so it is the objective of the orphanage to assist with social adaptation, to help the children to have a more positive attitude and outlook on life, provide medical care, and to engage the children in sports and other activities. In 2019, RCWS provided \$11,503 to fund the complete renovation of the orphanage's living facilities including putting down new floors and repainting walls and ceilings.

POTMA NEUROPSYCHIATRIC ORPHANAGE, MORDOVIA

The Potma Orphanage was established in 1975 and currently provides permanent housing for young people suffering from mental disabilities and who cannot care for themselves. The Orphanage also houses children with special needs, providing medical care and education. The orphanage urgently needed to replace its roof which leaked and let cold air into the building. In 2019, RCWS provided \$20,000 to replace the roof before the onset of winter.

VOLOGDA CENTER TO ASSIST ORPHANED CHILDREN, VOLOGDA REGION

The Vologda Center main areas of activity include the housing and upbringing of orphaned children and children left without parental care; placing children into foster families; training programs for future foster parents; reintegration work with the child's biological family. In 2019, RCWS provided funding in the amount of \$10,000 to cover the cost of replacing the windows in the center's two buildings in order to improve living conditions for the 72 children who live there.

ORPHANAGE FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN SHATURA,

MOSCOW REGION

The Orphanage for Children with Special Needs located in Shatura, Moscow region, has very limited funding and resources. Nevertheless, the dedicated staff work very hard to provide a 1st to 9th grade education to



About the Society



180 children with various disabilities. In 2019, RCWS provided funding in the amount of \$15,111 to equip the school at the orphanage with computers and multi-media equipment to help children with special needs to learn and better comprehend information through visual elements.

REHABILITATION CENTERS



Charitable Fund “Life in Motion”, St. Petersburg

Founded in 2014, the “Life in Motion” Fund provides monetary and other aid to children with disabilities and orphans with musculoskeletal pathologies. In May 2019, the Fund launched the first Russian pediatric prosthetics center, “I Want to Walk.” The center provides comprehensive services and rehabilitation, involving leading specialists from the United States and other countries, to allow children to receive modern, technologically improved prosthetics as well as rehabilitation and training. In 2019, RCWS provided \$20,000 to cover the cost of prosthetics components and other necessary equipment.

Rehabilitation Center “Krug”, Moscow

The Krug Rehabilitation Center provides educational, rehabilitation, and recreational programs for children with autism spectrum disorders, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, learning disabilities and physical handicaps. The Center’s programs are designed to help the participants gradually integrate into society while understanding how to best manage their disabilities. Many of the Center’s students have gone on to attend regular schools and college and have found gainful employment. In 2019, RCWS provided \$4,680 to cover summer travel and tour expenses for 70 children with special needs. Such trips are educational and provide important positive stimulation as well as welcome relief for families raising children with special needs. Teachers work not only with children, but also with their parents teaching them coping mechanisms, providing support, and the opportunity to meet other families facing similar challenges.

Rehabilitation Center “Nelishnie Deti”, Moscow

The rehabilitation Center “Nelishnie Deti” provides psychological assistance to families and children in crisis. Many of the children who frequent the Center come from broken families and have been through the adoption/foster process a number of times only to be returned to the custody of the government. The center’s mission is to educate parents on how to manage the care of their adopted/foster children while cultivating a supportive and nurturing environment. The Center additionally provides emergency psychological help for children and families in crisis, offers workshops, family trips and counseling by phone or email.

In 2019, RCWS provided \$10,000 to support the Center’s programs in Moscow, Beslan in Northern Ossetia, and Inozemzevo in southern Russia. Over 80 families in Moscow, 300 children in Beslan and 150 families in Inozemzevo will benefit from this project.

Educational Center “Kupel”, Moscow region

The educational center “Kupel” was established in 2008. The focus of the center is to assist the children with special needs, orphans, children living in single-parent households, and low-income large families. The Center offers classes in choral singing, beadwork, knitting, drawing, woodworking, English language, developmental games for toddlers, and more. The Center needed to expand its classroom space in order to accommodate the growing number of children attending the Studio – there are currently 120 children participating in the Center’s programs. With support from RCWS in the form of a \$12,670 grant, a second floor and an attic were built atop the existing building and other construction work was implemented. New equipment for the school was also purchased.

SCHOOLS

Educational Center “Big Change” (Bolshaya Peremena), Moscow

The “Big Change” Center is a non-profit organization founded by a group of teachers who were inspired by the idea of helping children brought up in orphanages to smoothly transition into adulthood and integrate into society. Big change currently works with over 70 students



who are between the ages of 12 and 36, have different educational levels, different goals, and varying life circumstances. During the last 17 years the Center’s educational programs have helped 573 orphans and children with special needs to pass school exams, be admitted to trade schools or colleges, find housing, get a job and live independently. In 2019, RCWS provided a \$10,000 grant to replace the 100-year-old facility’s aging fire prevention and alarm systems and to train teachers and students in fire safety techniques.

St. Nicholas School, Kislovodsk

Established in 1992 as the first Russian Orthodox School in the Northern Caucasus, the St. Nicholas School, weaves a social service program into its academic curriculum to instill in its students a sense of morality in addition to giving them a well-rounded education that inspires creativity. Over 90% of the school’s graduates are accepted to leading universities in Russia.

Currently 257 students receive a superior education that blends practical coursework such as computer training with various academic subjects. In 2019, RCWS awarded \$14,000 to provide nutritious meals for students, to acquire a new computer, chemistry lab equipment and books. Additionally, the school’s heating system was renovated.

Spivakov Foundation, Moscow

The Spivakov Foundation was established in 1994 by celebrated concert pianist Vladimir Spivakov to help disadvantaged children in Russia blossom both musically and artistically. The organization’s funds



About the Society



provide costly musical instruments, grants for master study abroad or at home, and opportunities to participate in concerts both as spectators and as performers. Since 2004, the annual “Moscow Welcomes Friends” festival has brought together over 1000 gifted children from across Russia. In 2019, the RCWS provided \$6,000 to cover accommodation and transportation expenses for children attending the “Moscow Welcomes Friends” Festival.

YELKA – ANNUAL NEW YEAR AND CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

It has been 20 years since RCWS organized our first Yelka, a modest Russian Christmas and New Year Party in Moscow for disadvantaged



children. Today, over 1,000 children annually participate in RCWS’s Yelka festivities and are treated to a Christmas show and presents. This past December, over 1,000 children traveled great distances to participate in the 20th annual Yelka event at the Theatrium, which is



one of the best children’s theaters in Moscow. The young participants attended the children’s music show based on a Balkan fairy-tale and received a gift.



Some children traveled great distances to attend, coming from orphanages and schools in Novomoskovsk, Ryazan, Yaroslavl, Tula, Pskov, Northern Caucasus and Moscow regions. In addition to the cost of holiday show tickets, RCWS and our supporters covered the travel expenses for the participants.

The selection process for Yelka participants is highly competitive as they are selected based on academic merit. They spend months diligently studying and striving to be the best in hopes of being awarded a trip to Moscow, a trip that is oftentimes the highlight of their year.



Additionally, RCWS personnel and volunteers, together with “Ded Moroz” (Russian Santa Claus), visited over 200 little patients at the Moscow Center for Maxillofacial Surgery and the Sechenov Medical Academy in Moscow to distribute gifts and bring some magic to their holiday.

Please visit our web site www.rcws.org for more information about the RCWS on-going projects.

RCWS has been tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code since 1944.

The Society is proud of its accomplishments in its 94-year history, and pays tribute to all of our predecessors and donors who transformed the organization into one of the leading charities in Russia today.

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Beatrice M. Fekula, President
Anna Sergeeva, Director, New York Office
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(2/6/2019)

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A photograph of a ballet performance. A male dancer in a dark suit stands in the background, holding a sword high above his head. In the foreground, a female dancer in a dark, flowing dress is in a dramatic, arched pose on the floor. The scene is lit with dramatic spotlights against a dark background.

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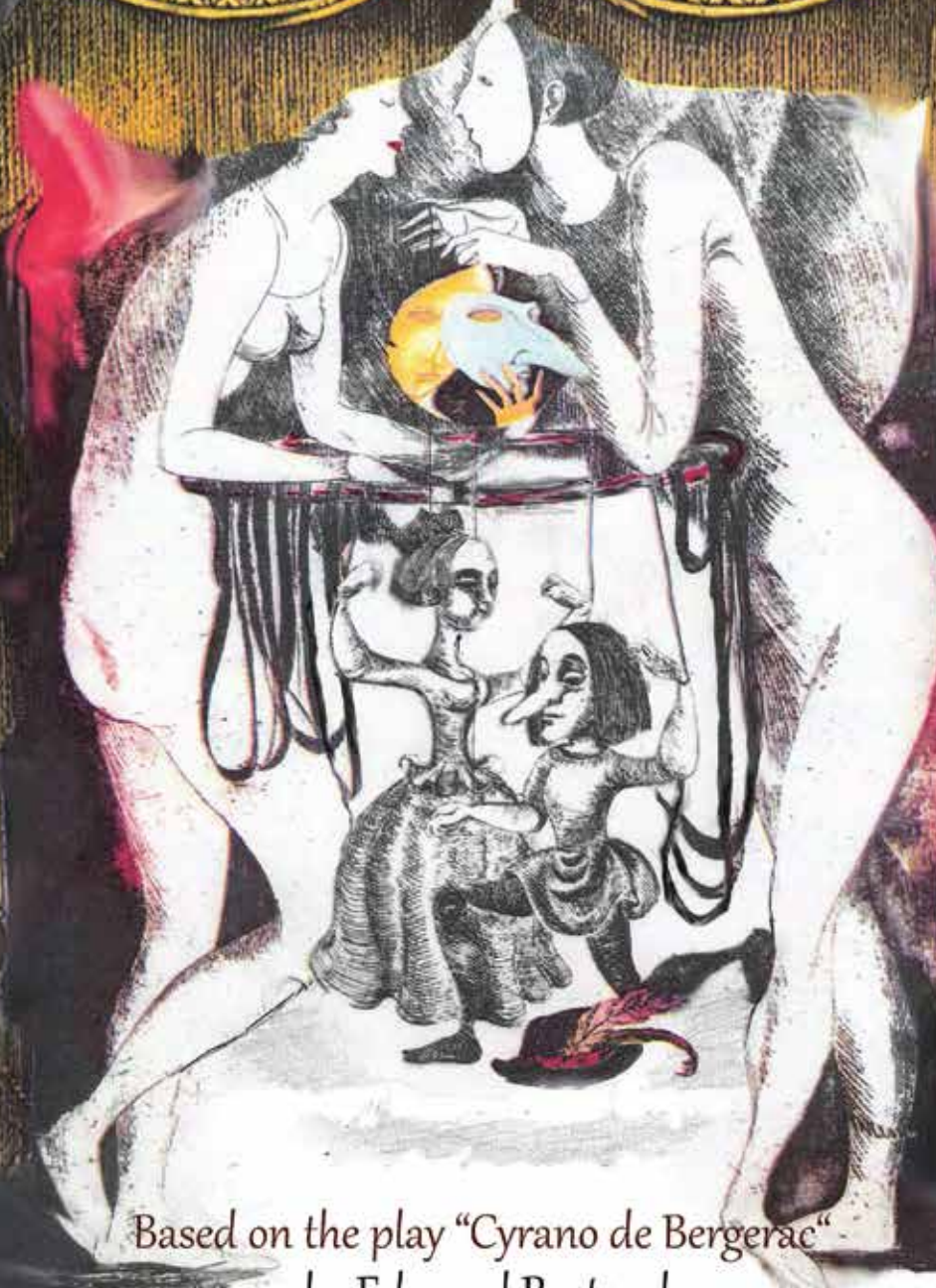
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Tonight's Performers



SERENA MALFI, Mezzo-soprano



Photo credit: Francesco Squeglia

The Italian mezzo-soprano Serena Malfi, born in Naples, studied at the Conservatorio and Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome making her debut in Salieri's *La Grotta di Trofonio* at the Winterthur Festival in 2009.

SINCE THIS DEBUT SHE HAS SUNG AT THE ZURICH OPERA HOUSE, Teatro Comunale Firenze, Jesi

Festival, Teatro dell'Opera di Roma, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Palau de les Arts Valencia, Teatro Real Madrid, Opera de Oviedo, Opéra National de Paris, Theatre des Champs Élysées, Teatro Colon Buenos Aires, the Wiener Staatsoper, Staatsoper Berlin, Teatro alla Scala, Royal Opera House (Covent Garden) in London, the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich, the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, the Canadian Opera Company in Toronto, Opéra de Lausanne, Teatro San Carlo in Naples, Staatsoper Dresden, Teatro Comunale Bologna, and the San Francisco Opera. She has worked with Daniel Barenboim, Sylvain Cambreling, Louis Langrée, Riccardo Frizza, Michele Mariotti, Ottavio Dantone, Alan Curtis, Corrado Rovaris, Alain Altinoglu, Jeremy Rohrer, Thomas Hengelbrock, Sir Mark Elder, Evelino Pidò, Marc Minkowski, Riccardo Chailly and Fabio Luisi among others.

Another role important in her career to-date is Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* in which she made her debut at the Zurich Opera in the 2010 season. She has also sung the role at the Royal Opera house in London, Teatro Real Madrid, Staatsoper Berlin, Kanazawa Concert Hall, Canadian Opera Company in Toronto and Teatro Comunale of Bologna.

She has appeared twice at the Pergolesi Festival in Jesi. In 2010 in *Il Flaminio* and in 2011 in the title role of *La Salustia*. Both of these operas have been released on DVD. In 2014 Serena made her debut at Teatro alla Scala in *Così fan tutte* conducted by Daniel Barenboim and returned there for the new production of *La Gazza Ladra* in 2017

conducted by Riccardo Chailly and staged by the Oscar-winning director Gabriele Salvatores.

Earlier engagements include *La Cenerentola* by Rossini in Bad Wildbad, Valencia, Tchaikovsky Hall Moscow, Teatro Colon Buenos Aires, Opéra de Paris, Teatro San Carlo (Naples), the Opéra de Lausanne and Wiener Staatsoper. In 2016 Serena made her debut at Staatsoper Dresden singing Ruggiero in Handel's *Alcina* and she sang her first Bellini as Romeo in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* at Opera de Oviedo. In 2016 Serena sang the role at Teatro dell'Opera di Roma staged by Emma Dante. She made her debut at the Teatro Real in Madrid as Annio in *La Clemenza di Tito* and repeated this role at the Wiener Staatsoper and the Bayerische Staatsoper. In Vienna she sang her first Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and also repeated the role at the Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires, the Royal Opera House Muscat in Oman with Wiener Staatsoper, at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York and recently at San Francisco Opera making her house debut.

Serena is now rehearsing Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* at the Metropolitan Opera and future engagements include her debut at the Los Angeles Opera as Cenerentola in the homonym opera by Rossini.

www.serenamalfi.com

BEN BLISS, Tenor



Photo credit: Dario Acosta

American tenor Ben Bliss, whom the *New York Classical Review* called "one of the leading Mozartian tenors," has gained a reputation as one of the most valuable and versatile performers of his generation. The 2019-2020 season features a return to the Metropolitan Opera as Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*, conducted by Harry Bicket, Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* for his debut

at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Tom Rakewell in Britten's *The Rakes Progress* with The Glyndebourne Festival and Belmonte in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* at Lyric Op-



Tonight's Performers



era of Kansas City, his hometown. Concert appearances include a debut with the San Francisco Symphony and Michael Tilson Thomas singing Steuermann in Wagner's *Der Fliegende Holländer*, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra singing Orff's *Carmina Burana*, conducted by Alain Altinoglu, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* with The Atlanta Symphony with performances in both Atlanta and in New York City at Carnegie Hall, Bernstein's *Songfest* with the Seattle Symphony and Handel's *Messiah* with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra.

The 2018-2019 season brought Ben Bliss back to the Metropolitan Opera as Tamino in *The Magic Flute*, as well as a debut with the Canadian Opera Company as Ferrando, role and house debuts with the Houston Grand Opera as Don Ottavio, Peter Quint in Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* with the Seattle Opera, and a return to the Santa Fe Opera as Ferrando. Orchestral and recital appearances included a return to the New York Philharmonic for Mozart's *Requiem* with Manfred Honeck as well as a crossover concert with Bramwell Tovey in Vail, Colorado; concerts in the NYC Parks with the Metropolitan Opera, and a solo recital at Messiah College in Pennsylvania with pianist Lachlan Glen.

In the 2017-2018 season, Mr. Bliss performed the role of Ferrando at the Metropolitan Opera, Seattle Opera, and Oper Frankfurt. He also made his house debut at Opera Philadelphia as Tamino, and performed Cassio in *Otello* with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. In the summer of 2018, he returned to the Santa Fe Opera to make his role debut as Robert Wilson in *Dr. Atomic* in a production directed by Peter Sellars. Concert appearances included Handel's *Messiah* with the New York Philharmonic, and the tenor solos in Schumann's *Das Paradies und die Peri* with Gustavo Dudamel, Peter Sellars and the Los Angeles Philharmonic. He also returned to the Aspen Music Festival and School for two separate programs of Benjamin Britten: *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings* and *Canticle II: Abraham and Isaac*.

Highlights of Mr. Bliss' recent seasons include the Metropolitan Opera as Belmonte, conducted by James Levine, Steuermann, conducted by Yannick Nézet-Séguin, and Tamino. He also made his European debut in the same role with the Glyndebourne Festival on tour. Returning as a principal artist to the Los Angeles Opera, he appeared as Tamino under the baton of James Conlon. He made

his company and role debut at the Santa Fe Opera as Flammant in a new production of *Capriccio* directed by Tim Albery, Belmonte with the Atlanta Opera, Tom Rakewell with the Boston Lyric Opera and Camille, Count de Rosillon in *Die lustige Witwe* for his house and role debut with the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona.

On the concert stage, Mr. Bliss performed with the New York Philharmonic singing Tony in *Bernstein's West Side Story Concert Suite No. 1* with Alan Gilbert, Haydn's *Creation* and Cassio in *Otello* at the Cincinnati May Festival with James Conlon, holiday concerts with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Lexington Philharmonic, Bach's *Magnificat* with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, and Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with the La Jolla Symphony. A recital tour with Lachlan Glen included stops at Carnegie Hall, the Folly Theater in Kansas City as part of the Harriman-Jewell series, Theater of the Arts at the University of the District of Columbia as part of the Vocal Arts DC Emerging Artists series, Hahn Hall at the Music Academy of the West as part of the University of California, Santa Barbara Arts & Lectures series, and in Cincinnati with *Matinée Musicale*.

Ben Bliss was a 2016 recipient of the Martin E. Segal award at Lincoln Center, awarded by the Metropolitan Opera, received the Mozart and Plácido Domingo awards at the 2015 Francisco Viñas International Competition in Barcelona, receiving 2nd place overall, first prize in the 2014 Gerda Lissner and Licia Albanese-Puccini Foundation competitions, as well as a Sara Tucker and Sullivan Foundation grant. Mr. Bliss is also the 2013 Operaia Don Plácido Domingo Sr. Zarzuela prizewinner. He resides with his wife Dana in Seattle, Washington. www.benblisstenor.com.

JONATHAN KELLY, Piano

Jonathan Kelly is an assistant conductor at The Metropolitan Opera. He has worked in similar capacities at the San Francisco Opera and The Glimmerglass Festival.

Frequently seen in concert, he has appeared with many of today's leading performers, including Plácido Domingo, Renée Fleming, Elīna Garanča, Susan Graham, Hei-Kyung Hong, Ana María Martínez, Anna Netrebko, Ramon Vargas, and Rolando Villazon. Formerly a lecturer at Yale University, he is a faculty member at the Manhattan School of Music.



Tonight's Performers



Born in Worcester, Massachusetts, Mr. Kelly spent his formative years in Kentucky. He graduated summa cum laude from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and continued his studies at the Manhattan School of Music.

DENYS DROZDYUK & ANTONINA SKOBINA



Photo credit: dsrphoto

Denys Drozdyuk and Antonina Skobina have been dancing together since 2006. They are two-time US National Latin Champions, World Championship Finalists and winners of all major ballroom dance competitions in the United States. Denys

and Antonina are the first ever American couple to win the Blackpool Amateur Rising Stars Latin Championship in Blackpool, England, which is the most prestigious ballroom dance competition in the world.

Denys and Antonina are also known as DNA – a name under which they have participated in NBC's TV show "World of Dance" in Seasons 1 and 2. They often perform as part of the "Stars of American Ballet" troupe in the US and internationally.

The couple is known for their unique fusion dance performances where they incorporate different dance styles such as Ballroom, Contemporary, Jazz, Hip-Hop, etc. Denys and Antonina have dedicated their lives to dance and hope that their art will inspire audiences worldwide.

THE LESTER LANIN ORCHESTRA

Music Director Spencer Bruno

The world-renowned Lester Lanin Orchestra is an acknowledged leader and innovator of playing danceable, finger-snapping rhythms for the *haut monde* of society, and has played at the Petroushka Ball for most, if not all, of its more than five-decade existence. The orchestra's continued success may be attributed to its ability to adapt

to the changing requirements of varying occasions, be it a wedding reception playing Top-40 music, a debutante party, charity ball, or a Presidential Inaugural Ball. Mr. Spencer Bruno, the orchestra's Music Director and principal arranger, is known throughout the United States and Europe as the driving force behind the orchestra's first-rate reputation, notable for attracting the finest and most professional musicians. As a saxophonist-clarinetist-flutist, he has recorded and performed with many top classical and pop performers; most recently the list has included Natalie Kole, Paul Anka, and Johnny Mathis, among many others.

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www.Club-Kaleidoscope.org

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On the initiative of RACH-C, in 2012, the State of New York established April as **Russian American History Month**. Since then, RACH-C has been the organizer and coordinator of the "Month".



For news and events of the
Month visit: www.rach-c.org

Contact:
Olga Zatsepina, Ph.D.
President, RACH-C
Chair, Coalition in Support :
**Russian American History
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info@rach-c.org



The U.S.-Russia Chamber of Commerce (the “USRCC”), a 501(c)(6) non-profit corporation headquartered in Houston, Texas, with branches in Chicago, IL, and New York, NY. USRCC was established in 2009 to promote trade and investment between Russia and the United States. Its membership includes Fortune 1000 companies.

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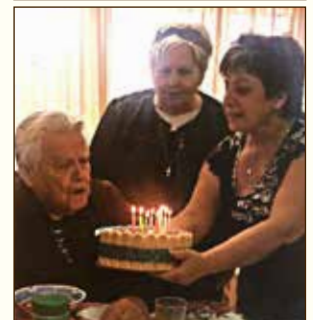
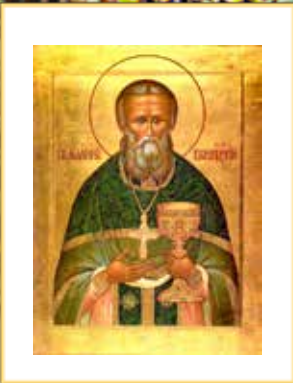
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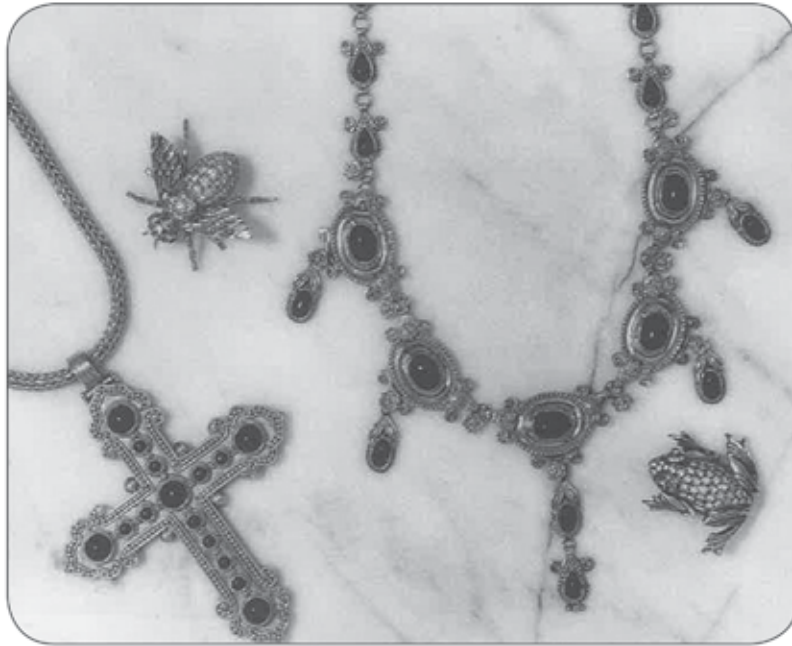
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Raffle Prizes



1. GRAND PRIZE:

BUSINESS CLASS TRAVEL FOR TWO PEOPLE ON AEROFLOT-RUSSIAN AIRLINES FROM THE UNITED STATES TO MOSCOW OR ST. PETERSBURG.

Travel can commence from any of Aeroflot's US departure points, New York, Los Angeles, Miami, or Washington DC. Both passengers must travel together on flights departing between March 1st and November 30th, 2020. Special conditions and restrictions apply to prize travel. Courtesy of Aeroflot, www.aeroflot.ru

2. CLIVE CHRISTIAN ORIGINAL COLLECTION

NO. 1 FEMININE FLORAL ORIENTAL

20% Perfume Concentration. A floral oriental, with fruity top notes of Mirabelle Plum, white Peach and Bergamot which slowly and sensually unravel to reveal Jasmine, Carnation and a heart blooming with Rose, a flower symbolic of Aphrodite's gardens of love and beauty. A rich and complex perfume that is subtle yet sophisticated.

Value: \$850

Courtesy of Clive Christian

3. TWO TICKETS TO "THE CHERRY ORCHARD" BY MOSCOW PUSHKIN DRAMA THEATRE

June 2020, The New York City Center

Courtesy of Cherry Orchard Festival, cherryorchardfestival.org

4. STERLING SILVER CRYSTAL EARRINGS

Value: \$175

Courtesy of The Persian Shop, 534 Madison Ave., tel: 212-355-4643.

5. 3LAB WW EYE CREAM

WW Eye Cream is a four-in-one treatment cream that reduces the appearance of wrinkles the look of puffiness, dark circles and age spots.

Value: \$290

Courtesy of 3LAB, www.3LAB.com

6. NARS COSMETICS GIFT BOX WITH THE FULL SIZE BEST SELLING PRODUCTS

Includes: Climax Mascara, Wanted Eyeshadow Palette, Velvet Matte Lip Pencil, Dolce Vita Blush, High Pigment Long-Wear Eyeliner, Afterglow Lip Balm, The Multiple, Eye Makeup Remover, Radiance Primer, Eyelash Curler, Liquid Blush, Candle, Audacious Lipstick, Voyageur Eyeshadow Palette.

Value: \$500

Courtesy of NARS Cosmetics

7. OSETRA CAVIAR

Includes: 1/4 lbs of Imperial Osetra caviar with blinis, creme fraiche and 2 pearl spoons in a luxury vegan leather box.

Value: \$550

Courtesy of: Anna and Arthur Dozortsev, IKRAA Caviar

8. CHAMPAIGNE BUCKET WITH A BOTTLE OF CHARLES HEIDSIECK 2006 CHAMPAIGNE

Courtesy of Beatrice Fekula

9. CLIVE CHRISTIAN ORIGINAL COLLECTION NO. 1 MASCULINE

20% Perfume Concentration. An Oriental that is understated yet distinctive. The base notes of precious 50 year-old Indian sandalwood, powdery musk and vetiver add a rich warmth, enveloping the wearer in a balmy veil of fragrance.

Value: \$850

Courtesy of Clive Christian

10. TWO TICKETS TO "RUSSIAN HAMLET" BY EIFMAN BALLET OF ST. PETERSBURG, WITH ST. PETERSBURG SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

June 19-21, 2020, David H. Koch Theatre at Lincoln Center.

Value: \$300

Courtesy of Ardani Artists Management

11. NARS COSMETICS GIFT BOX WITH THE FULL SIZE BEST SELLING PRODUCTS

Includes: Climax Mascara, Wanted Eyeshadow Palette, Velvet Matte Lip Pencil, Dolce Vita Blush, High Pigment Long-Wear Eyeliner, Afterglow Lip Balm, The Multiple, Eye Makeup Remover, Radiance Primer, Eyelash Curler, Liquid Blush, Candle, Audacious Lipstick, Voyageur Eyeshadow Palette.

Value: \$500

Courtesy of NARS Cosmetics

12. COCKTAIL NATURAL AMBER SILVER RING BY VALERIO 888

Courtesy of Valerio 888, tel. 212-631-8090, www.valerio888.com.

13. 111SKIN INTENSIVE EDIT SKINCARE SET

The active edit to give you youthful, radiant skin.

A potent collection, this edit works to address wrinkles and fine lines as well as tightening, toning and brightening the skin. The selection also contains our peptide-packed contour gel and cutting-edge mask with three unique layers that address volume loss and barrier degradation. Utilised collectively, these products contain our most robust anti-aging ingredients for refined, visible results.

Includes: 2 x Celestial Black Diamond Lifting and Firming Treatment Masks, 2 x Celestial Black Diamond Eye Masks, 1 x Celestial Black Diamond Serum, 1 x Celestial Black Diamond Contour Gel, 1 x Vitamin C Brightening Cleanser, 1 x Vitamin C Brightening Booster

Value: \$1,285

Courtesy of 111SKIN

14. SPECIAL PRIZE FROM RTVI

Special Prize - a day at RTVI's Newsroom in New York. Explore how the independent Russian media operates on the daily and grab lunch with RTVI's Editor-in-Chief Stanislav Kucher who will share valuable experience and provide useful insights for those seeking to become a journalist. Courtesy of RTVI.

15. IMPERIA RUSSIAN STANDARD VODKA

Courtesy of Russian Standard, www.russianstandardvodka.com

16. GOURMET DELIGHT GIFT BASKET - FROM NETCOST MARKET WITH LOVE

Courtesy of NetCost Market. World of Food. www.NetCostMarket.com

17. NOBLE HERITAGE SILK SHAWL

This festive and elegant 100% natural silk shawl will make its wearer feel like the biggest star of an evening! Making the shawl even more special, the elegant noble patterns, paying homage to the aristocratic tea parties of the past, creates an overall image that is visually appealing and luxurious to the touch. Courtesy of St-Petersburg Global Trade House, www.fromrussia.com

18. RUSSIAN TRADITIONAL GOURMET GIFT SET WITH RED CAVIAR "RUSSIAN SELECTED"

Russian Traditional Gourmet Gift Set includes: Red Caviar in a Tin Can; Red Caviar in a Glass Jar; Royal Tea Nicholas II, 8.8 oz/ 250 g; Russian Aerated Chocolate Bar; Chocolate Candy Assortment; Nesting doll; Khokhloma wooden spoon; Gift Box.

Value: \$105

Courtesy of Maria Loginova



Raffle Prizes & Auction



19. SIX MONTH SUPPLY OF NUTRAFOL FOR HIM

Win a 6 month supply of Nutrafol, a dermatologist recommended nutraceutical oral supplement for better hair health sold in over 700 dermatology practices. 100% drug-free. Happy Hair. Happy You. Courtesy of NUTRACEUTICAL WELLNESS INC, www.nutrafol.com

20. ONE FREE WHOLE BODY CRYOTHERAPY SESSION

Value: \$85
Courtesy of Personal Care Professionals, 935 River Road Ste. 100, Edgewater, NJ. Tel: 201-773-4644

21. GEORGIAN GIFT BASKET

Courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Sarandinaki Kadaria

22. SIX MONTH SUPPLY OF NUTRAFOL FOR HER

Win a 6 month supply of Nutrafol, a dermatologist recommended nutraceutical oral supplement for better hair health sold in over 700 dermatology practices. 100% drug-free. Happy Hair. Happy You. Courtesy of NUTRACEUTICAL WELLNESS INC, www.nutrafol.com

23. GOURMET DELIGHT GIFT BASKET - FROM NETCOST MARKET WITH LOVE

Courtesy of NetCost Market. World of Food. www.NetCostMarket.com

24. IMPERIA RUSSIAN STANDARD VODKA

Courtesy of Russian Standard, www.russianstandardvodka.com

25. 1 HOUR TENNIS LESSON WITH KATYA VASILYEV, FORMER CAPTAIN AND FULL SCHOLARSHIP D1 PLAYER AT BOSTON COLLEGE, AT THE PRESTIGIOUS TOWN TENNIS CLUB IN MIDTOWN, NYC, FOLLOWED BY 2 COMPLIMENTARY DRINKS AT THE CLUB DINING ROOM.

All levels of tennis welcome, racquets, grips, balls, towels will be provided. Value: \$200
Courtesy of Katya Vasilyev

26. 111SKIN RADIANCE EDIT SKINCARE SET

Indulge in Rose Gold excellence for lasting luminosity A sophisticated duo that will illuminate the complexion through the festive season. Our cult-favourite Rose Gold Brightening Facial Treatment Mask serves to brighten the skin to create a beautiful base while the Rose Gold Radiance Booster is the perfect product for a dewy, lit-from-within glow.

Includes: 1 x Rose Gold Brightening Facial Treatment Mask, 1x Rose Gold Radiance Booster
Value: \$288
Courtesy of 111SKIN

27. TWISTED IMPERIAL EGG JEWELRY BOX WITH CROWN IN RED

This refined Imperial style egg pays tribute to the original egg crafted by one of the greatest goldsmiths, and designers in decorative arts and jeweler to the Russian imperial court Peter Carl Fabergé (1846-1920). The egg will look beautiful practically everywhere in your home, from a bookshelf, to a coffee table, to a mantle over your fireplace, beautifully adding to the interior decor around it.

Courtesy of St-Petersburg Global Trade House, www.fromrussia.com

28. LUXURY GUERLAIN COSMETICS BOX

Value: \$510
Courtesy of Irina Bekkerman

29. ONE FREE CHIROPRACTIC SESSION

Value: \$100
Courtesy of Personal Care Professionals, 935 River Road Ste. 100, Edgewater, NJ. Tel: 201-773-4644

30. TULIP COBALT NETTING TEACUP W/A SAUCER

This teacup and saucer set is a part of the Tulip Cobalt Netting tea set, one of the most famous sets, produced by the Imperial Porcelain Factory. The set is inspired by the very first Russian porcelain tea set, created in the 18th century for Empress Elizabeth and it is known to have earned a gold medal at the 1958 World Festival in Brussels. The royal blue netting with golden stars will make any table look festive and turn any tea-party into a special event!

Courtesy of St-Petersburg Global Trade House, www.fromrussia.com

31. ONE FREE CUPPING SESSION

Value: \$100
Courtesy of Personal Care Professionals, 935 River Road Ste. 100, Edgewater, NJ. Tel: 201-773-4644

32. LUXURY GUERLAIN COSMETICS BOX

Value: \$530
Courtesy of Irina Bekkerman

33. IMPERIA RUSSIAN STANDARD VODKA

Courtesy of Russian Standard, www.russianstandardvodka.com

34. SPA GIFT CERTIFICATE

Value: \$80
Courtesy of Lena Skincare, 211 East 43rd St, #1704, NYC, tel:917-445-5558.

List in progress

SILENT AUCTION

"FULL FACE BOTOX GIVEAWAY", BY SERGEI KALSOW MD, BOARD CERTIFIED PLASTIC SURGEON IN NYC.

Value: up to \$1,200
Courtesy of Dr. Sergei Kalsow, www.drkalsow.com

AMBER NECKLACE BY VALERIO 888

Value: 1,000
Courtesy of Valerio 888, tel. 212-631-8090, www.valerio888.com.

BLACK AND WHITE CRYSTAL NECKLACE

Value: \$225
Courtesy of The Persian Shop, 534 Madison Ave., tel: 212-355-4643.

FRESHWATER PEARL CRYSTAL NECKLACE

Value: \$185
Courtesy of The Persian Shop, 534 Madison Ave., tel: 212-355-4643.

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Special Thanks



Aeroflot-Russian Airlines
Alchemy Events
Blavatnik Family Foundation
Irina Troshin and CLIVE CHRISTIAN counter at Bergdorf Goodman
Mr. Peter Gelb and the Metropolitan Opera
Elke Geacintov
3LAB
NetCost Market
Roland Peralta and NUTRACEUTICAL WELLNESS
Elena Orlukova and Confident Care Corp.
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Russian Samovar Restaurant
Brighton Bazaar
Steinway & Sons
Peter and Anna Tcherepnine
Mr. Valery Dantchenko and Mr. Ian Serjantov, Valerio 888

The Russian Children's Welfare Society expresses its sincerest thanks to those generous and wonderful people who have put in numerous hours and a valiant effort to make this evening not only possible, but also special:

Veronika Arkhangel
Irina Bekkerman
Anna Breusova
Ekaterina Brody
Paulina Brown
Ilya Dembitski
Tatiana Geringer
Sophia Geringer
Rajaa Chouairi
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Peter Fekula

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