

CONTACT:
Christina Kellogg 510.643.6714
ckellogg@calperfs.berkeley.edu
Joe Yang 510.642.9121
scyang@calperfs.berkeley.edu

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**RUSSIA'S LEGENDARY BORODIN QUARTET PERFORMS MUSIC OF
RUSSIAN MASTERS AT CAL PERFORMANCES SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12
AT 8:00 P.M.**

BERKELEY, October 6, 2005 – Known for its “penetrating objectivity, refusal to add superfluous pizzazz, [and] absolute fidelity to the music” (*Financial Times*, London), Moscow’s famed **Borodin Quartet** performs **Saturday, November 12 at 8:00 p.m.** at First Congregational Church. Unquestionably one of the great music ensembles of our time, the Borodin Quartet will present quartets by three Russian composers: two undisputed geniuses, **Dmitri Shostakovich** and **Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky**, and the lesser known **Nicolai Miaskovsky**. “Great musical traditions seldom come better preserved than that in the Borodin Quartet...their cellist, Valentin Berlinsky, is a link to the Quartet’s beginnings in Moscow...and to composers they have worked with, including Shostakovich” (*The Times*, London).

PROGRAM

Composer **Nicolai Miaskovsky** (1881–1950) is a relatively unknown but highly original Russian composer. His String Quartet No. 13 in A Minor, Op. 86 was written just before he died and first performed by the Beethoven Quartet. In his final years the composer felt the sting of Stalinist repression and his music was largely unheard in the Soviet Union. Musicologist Peter Laki says of the String Quartet No. 13, “the aging master is looking back on the days of his youth. Throughout his life, Miaskovsky was a prolific writer of romansy – romantic art songs based on a traditional genre that flourished in the cities of Russia throughout the 19th century. This specifically Russian tradition is evoked in the beautiful slow movement of the quartet.”

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–1975) composed his String Quartet No. 1 in C Major, Op. 49, in 1938. A light quartet in mood and tone, the work was heavily influenced by events in the composer’s life. It was begun within weeks of the birth of his son Maxim, and not long after the successful debut of his Symphony No. 5. Writing for a recent Hyperion recording of the piece, Robert Matthew-Walker notes: “For once, this most sensitive artist appears to have been at ease with the world.”

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The third piece on the program is a well-known masterpiece of 19th century music, the String Quartet No. 2 in F Major, Op. 22 by **Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky** (1840–1893). Completed in 1874, it is often associated with the Russian custom of dressing in costume and calling on neighbors at Christmastime, according to musicologist Luke Howard of Brigham Young University. “This is apparent in the folksiness of the first movement's themes and the carefree ‘tipsy’ quality heard in much of the quartet.”

BORODIN QUARTET

The **Borodin Quartet** was founded in 1945 as the Moscow Philharmonic Quartet and renamed the Borodin Quartet, after Alexander Borodin, the first major Russian composer of string quartets, in 1955. It is the world's longest-lived string quartet, and has performed an extensive range of the vast string quartet literature in its 60 years. Its particular affinity for the Russian repertoire was stimulated by its early, close relationship with Dmitri Shostakovich, who personally worked with the Borodin Quartet on each of his quartets. The group's performances of Shostakovich are widely regarded as the definitive interpretations. The Borodin Quartet is “the epitome of all that is finest in this most refined of musical genres” (*The Times*, London).

Cellist **Valentin Alexandrovich Berlinsky** is the last remaining original member of the Borodin Quartet. “The continuity provided by Berlinsky...still gives the ensemble its uniquely magisterial presence” (*Times of London*). Born in 1925 in Irkutsk, he studied with his father, a violinist, and at age 13 began serious studies at the Central Music School in Moscow, and later at the Moscow Conservatory. He teaches at the Gnesinikh Musical Pedagogical Institute in Moscow. Berlinsky has personally selected his Borodin colleagues.

Violinist **Ruben Aharonian** was born in Riga, Latvia in 1947 and studied at the Moscow Conservatory. He has won prizes at several international competitions, including the Enescu Competition in Bucharest, the Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, and the Montreal Competition. He is professor of violin at Yerevan State Conservatory, and has toured extensively in Europe, North America, and South America. Aharonian joined the Quartet in 1996.

Second violinist **Andrei Fedotovitch Abramenkov** was born in Moscow in 1935 into a family of musicians. As a boy he sang soprano in the Bolshoi Theatre choir. He studied violin with Yuri Yankelevich and at the Moscow Conservatory, and while a student at the conservatory joined the Moscow Chamber Orchestra under Rudolf Barshai, playing there for 17 years. He has been with the Quartet since 1974.

Violist **Igor Naidin** was born in 1969 and is the newest member of the Borodin Quartet. He studied at the Moscow Conservatory under Yuri Bashmet and in 1995 won the Second International Viola Competition in Moscow. He was a founding member of the Quartetto Russo, which won awards at the London International String Quartet Competition and the Concertino Prague. Naidin received coaching from Valentin Berlinsky, Mikhail Kopelman and violist Dmitri Sherebalin of the Borodin Quartet, whom he eventually replaced in 1996.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for the **Borodin Quartet** on **Saturday, November 12** at **8:00 p.m.** in First Congregational Church are priced at **\$42.00**. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu; and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens and other students receive a \$2 discount, and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$3 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988, or visit the Cal Performances web site at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Saturday, November 12 at 8:00 p.m.

First Congregational Church
Dana St. at Durant Ave., Berkeley

Concert

Borodin Quartet

Program:

Miaskovsky/String Quartet No. 13 in A Minor, Op. 86

Shostakovich/String Quartet No. 1 in C Major, Op. 49

Tchaikovsky/String Quartet No. 2 in F Major, Op. 22

Tickets: \$42.00, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu; and at the door.
