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**MOSCOW STATE RADIO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
PERFORMS RUSSIAN MASTERWORKS BY TCHAIKOVSKY,
RACHMANINOFF AND RIMSKY-KORSAKOV
SATURDAY, MARCH 20 AT 8:00 P.M. AT ZELLERBACH HALL**

Robert Cole conducts with pianist Alexander Sinchuk and cellist Julian Schwarz

***Sightlines*: Pre-concert talk by UC Berkeley musicologist William Quillen, March 20 at 7:00 p.m.**

BERKELEY, February 16, 2010—The Moscow State Radio Symphony Orchestra—a “crack ensemble that brings a rigorous approach to music-making” (*Los Angeles Times*), will present an all-Russian program at Cal Performances’ **Zellerbach Hall** on **Saturday, March 20** at **8:00 p.m.** Conducted by **Robert Cole**, the orchestra will be joined by 22-year-old Russian pianist **Alexander Sinchuk** for **Sergei Rachmaninoff’s** *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, and 18-year-old American cello sensation **Julian Schwarz** for **Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky’s** *Variations on a Rococo Theme in A* for cello and orchestra. Also on the program are Tchaikovsky’s overture to *Romeo and Juliet* and **Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov’s** *Scheherazade* Symphonic Suite for Orchestra.

A ***Sightlines*** pre-performance talk will be given by UC Berkeley musicologist **William Quillen** on Saturday, March 20, from 7:00 to 7:30 p.m. in Zellerbach Hall. This talk is free to event ticket holders.

PROGRAM

The Moscow State Radio Symphony Orchestra will open the evening’s concert with the overture to *Romeo and Juliet* by **Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky**. The piece, which premiered in Moscow on March 16, 1870 and was substantially revised later by Tchaikovsky, is dedicated to the Russian composer Mily Balakirev. Balakirev, one of a group of composers who worked to create a distinctive Russian school of music, had suggested the idea for the piece to Tchaikovsky and provided an outline. The overture opens with the stately Friar Lawrence theme, and then

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presents the Montague-Capulet conflict through a series of key changes, culminating in a powerful climax. The second section, which employs muted violas and English horn to evoke the romance of the star-crossed young lovers, is interrupted by a combination of the Friar Lawrence and conflict themes. The overture concludes with another, altogether different fusion of themes as the music subsides.

Next, the ensemble will play *Variations on a Rococo Theme in A* for Cello and Orchestra, also by Tchaikovsky. In spite of the piece's name, the theme is not Rococo in origin; instead, it is an original melody that Tchaikovsky wrote in the rococo style. The composer began work on the *Variations* late in 1876 and completed them in 1877. The work is dedicated to the German cellist Wilhelm Fitzenhagen, a fellow professor of Tchaikovsky's at the Moscow Conservatory, who gave the *Variations* its first public performance in Moscow in November 1877. Fitzenhagen subsequently made considerable edits and changes to the piece, in particular to the cello part. Tchaikovsky's original version consisted of a theme and eight variations while Fitzenhagen's only has seven variations. The individual variations, which are played without pauses, range in mood, rhythm, key and tempo from *Andante sostenuto* to the concluding *Allegro vivo*. The orchestra will perform Fizenhagen's version in Berkeley with cellist Julian Schwarz.

Sergei Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, the next work on the concert, is a set of 24 variations on a *Caprice* composed by the 19th-century Italian violin virtuoso Niccolò Paganini. Rachmaninoff wrote the piece in 1934 in Switzerland (he had left Russia in 1917, driven out by the Russian Revolution), and the *Rhapsody* premiered that same year in Baltimore with Leopold Stokowski conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra and Rachmaninoff himself at the piano. The 24 variations are not always exposed in self-contained movements with clear-cut beginnings and endings; instead, they often grow naturally out of each other in a continuous flow of music. The seventh and tenth variations are notable because they introduce the *Dies Irae* (Day of Wrath) chant from the Gregorian Mass for the Dead. Rachmaninoff wrote that this was intended to invoke Paganini, who was rumored to be a sorcerer in league with evil spirits. Another significant variation, the fifteenth, features a solo piano performance for 28 measures. From there, the variations grow increasingly complex through the *Rhapsody's* climax,

which combines the Paganini theme with the *Dies Irae*. The piece concludes quietly with the piano returning to Paganini's *caprice*. Alexander Sinchuk is the featured pianist.

To conclude the concert, the Moscow State Radio Symphony Orchestra will play **Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's** *Scheherazade* symphonic suite for orchestra, a symphonic poem the composer wrote in 1888 after reading *One Thousand and One Arabian Nights*. The four movements of the work have vague thematic titles that do not however, represent specific Sinbad tales: "The Sea and Sinbad's Ship," "The Story of the Kalendar Prince," "The Prince and the Young Princess," and "The Festival at Baghdad." The first three movements introduce and play with a variety of melodies, while the final movement reintroduces thematic material from the previous sections in addition to original melodies and musical ideas. In addition to the usual orchestral strings, *Scheherazade* employs an array of percussion instruments, including tambourines, cymbals and tympani, as well as woodwinds, horns, trumpets, trombones, tuba and harp to create a distinctively Russian yet evocatively eastern orchestration.

MOSCOW STATE RADIO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The Moscow State Radio Symphony Orchestra was formed in 1978 to present weekly broadcasts of 18th–20th century symphonic repertoire to the citizens of Russia. It soon expanded its broadcasting to television, presenting concerts on Russian, Korean and German television stations, and launched a subscription series based in Moscow's Tchaikovsky Hall and the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory. The orchestra's first music director was Alexander Mikhailov, who was followed in 1996 by Anatoli Nemudrov. Today, the orchestra follows the European tradition of not having a permanent chief conductor; instead, Nemudrov invites maestros from Russia and abroad to lead the orchestra and continue its artistic development. "The overall impression here was one of orchestral polish and muster," (*Los Angeles Times*).

In addition to its extensive broadcasting work, the Moscow State Radio Symphony Orchestra has appeared on film soundtracks, performed with the Moscow Classical Ballet and toured internationally. It has recorded more than 30 CDs since 1995 with several different labels. The orchestra's 2004 tour of the United States included 42 concerts in 22 states, and was described as "colossal—an epic undertaking" (*San Diego Union Tribune*).

ROBERT COLE

Robert Cole retired as Director of Cal Performances in 2009 after 23 years of leadership. Cole, the former Director of the Berkeley Festival & Exhibition, served as Associate Conductor of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra and appeared as a guest conductor with the Hartford Ballet, the Boston Civic Orchestra, the Florida Philharmonic, the Sacramento, Pasadena and Chautauqua symphony orchestras, and many other symphonic, dance and operatic organizations. He was Music and Executive Director of the Ballet Society of Los Angeles and has conducted and produced opera and musical comedy in California and New York. A graduate of the University of Southern California School of Music, he studied conducting with Leonard Bernstein and Leon Barzin at the Tanglewood Music Center, with Hans Swarowsky in Europe and with Richard Lert. He has conducted concerts for the Lake Tahoe Summer Music Festival in Lake Tahoe, California, and is Principal Guest Conductor of the Perm (Russia) Opera & Ballet Theater.

ALEXANDER SINCHUK

Alexander Sinchuk was the winner of the 2009 International Rachmaninoff Piano Competition in Moscow. He was born in 1988 in Nakhodka, Russia, Sinchuk began piano studies at age seven and began participating in piano competitions at age nine. In 2000, Sinchuk began studying with Izolda Zemskova at the Far East Academy of Arts in Russia, and in 2002 he entered the Central Music School at the Moscow Conservatory to study with Nina Makarova. He graduated from the Central Music School in 2006 and entered the Moscow Conservatory to study with V.V. Pyasetsky. Sinchuk has won many piano competitions, including the 2002 International Competition for Pianists in Vladivostok, Russia; the 2004 All-Russia Open Competition for Young Musicians; and the 2005 K.N. Igumnov International Piano Competition. He has performed with numerous Russian and international orchestras, and in 2009 made his Carnegie Hall solo recital debut playing works by Scriabin, Tchaikovsky, Prokofiev and Rachmaninoff.

JULIAN SCHWARZ

Seattle-born cellist **Julian Schwarz** made his orchestral debut at age 11, playing Concerto No. 1 by Camille Saint-Saëns with the Seattle Symphony under the baton of his father,

Music Director Gerard Schwarz. Now 18 years-old, Julian Schwarz has appeared with many Seattle-area orchestras and with the Greensboro (NC) Symphony and San Diego's Tifereth Israel Orchestra. He has performed as a chamber musician at the Aspen, Interlochen, Eastern, California Summer and Encore music festivals, and was the Featured Young Artist at both the Seattle Chamber and the Cape Cod music festivals. Schwarz won the Northwest Sinfonietta Youth Concerto Competition in 2007 and 2008, which led to his appointment as assistant conductor of Seattle's Lake Union Civic Orchestra. In 2009, he appeared on the cover of *Teen Strings* magazine, which reported that "Schwarz already has laid the foundation for a remarkable career," and was featured on NPR's "Live From The Top" radio program. He currently studies with Ronald Leonard at the Colburn School in Los Angeles.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **Moscow State Radio Symphony Orchestra** with **Robert Cole**, conductor, **Alexander Sinchuk**, piano, and **Julian Schwarz**, cello, on **Saturday, March 20, 2010, at 8:00 p.m.** in **Zellerbach Hall** are priced at **\$28.00, \$40.00** and **\$60.00**. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperformances.org; and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens, other students and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$5 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988 or visit the Cal Performances web site at www.calperformances.org.

For select performances, Cal Performances offers UCB student, faculty and staff, senior and community rush tickets. Rush tickets are announced three hours prior to a performance and are available in person only at the Ticket Office beginning one hour before the performance; quantities may be limited. Rush ticket sales are limited to one ticket per person; all sales are cash only. Rush ticket prices are \$10 for UCB students; \$15 for UCB faculty and staff (UCB ID required) and seniors age 65 or older; and \$20 for all other community members. Information is available on Cal Performances' Facebook pages and at (510) 642-9988, press 2 for the rush hotline, three hours prior to a performance only.

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**CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:
CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS**

Saturday, March 20 at 7:00 p.m.
SIGHTLINES

Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley

Pre-performance talk by UC Berkeley musicologist William Quillen. *Sightlines* is a continuing program of pre- and post-performance discussions with Cal Performances' guest artists and scholars, designed to enrich the audience's experience. This talk is free to event ticket holders.

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Saturday, March 20 at 8:00 p.m.

Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley

Orchestra

Moscow State Radio Symphony Orchestra

Robert Cole, conductor

Alexander Sinchuk, piano

Julian Schwarz, cello

Program: Tchaikovsky/*Romeo and Juliet* Overture; Tchaikovsky/*Variations on a Rococo Theme in A for Cello and Orchestra*; Rachmaninoff/*Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, Op. 43; Rimsky-Korsakov/*Scheherazade* Symphonic Suite for Orchestra, Op. 35.

Tickets: \$28.00, \$40.00 and \$60.00, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperformances.org; and at the door.

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