

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS**  
**MEZZO-SOPRANO EKATERINA SEMENCHUK**  
**IN HER BAY AREA DEBUT**  
**ACCOMPANIED BY LARISSA GERGIEVA**  
**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5 AT 3:00 P.M. IN HERTZ HALL**

"In 30 seconds I saw she was a star." – **Valery Gergiev**

**BERKELEY, October 28, 2004** – Young Russian mezzo-soprano **Ekaterina Semenchuk** makes her Bay Area debut at Cal Performances on **Sunday, December 5 at 3:00 p.m.** in **Hertz Hall**. She will be accompanied by her mentor **Larissa Gergieva**, Honored National Artist of Russia and Artistic Director of the Mariinsky Academy of Young Singers.

Spotted by Larissa Gergieva in 1999, Ms. Semenchuk has been one of the star students of the Mariinsky Academy ever since. Ms. Gergieva, who is known for her instinct to find talent, regards Ms. Semenchuk as a born stage artist: "[She] has an uncanny feel for atmosphere, and her voice is a gift from the gods. Such things can't be taught." Ms. Gergieva's brother, Maestro Valery Gergiev, the principal conductor of the Kirov Orchestra, has said that it took him just 30 seconds upon his first meeting with Ms. Semenchuk to know she would be a big star. She is fulfilling that early promise with acclaimed performances at the Metropolitan Opera and the Royal Opera House.

**EKATERINA SEMENCHUK**

Born in Minsk, Ekaterina Semenchuk started playing the piano at the age of eight and graduated to the guitar and the accordion, on which she initially thought she might build a career. "But I always knew I had a voice, and even at 12 it was unusually low," says Ms. Semenchuk. "My only ambition is to be an opera singer."

Mezzo-soprano Ekaterina Semenchuk was accepted into the Minsk Music School to study with Professor Rogovich. In 1995 she entered the Byelorussian Music Academy until 1999, when she was admitted to the Mariinsky Young Singer's Academy.

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Ms. Semenchuk was a prizewinner at the 1997 Dvořák Competition, being awarded diplomas for both operatic and chamber singing. In 1999 she entered the International Obratzsova Competition, winning the Hope Award and the prize for the best performance of works by contemporary Russian composers. Ms. Semenchuk was also a finalist in the 2000 Placido Domingo Operalia Competition that took place in Los Angeles. In June 2001, she represented Russia in the Cardiff Singer of the World Competition and was selected as one of five finalists.

Ms. Semenchuk's age does not correlate to the experience and exposure of her performances worldwide. Her career highlights include the roles of Pauline in *Pique Dame*, conducted by Valery Gergiev on tour with the Kirov Opera in China; Olga in *Eugene Onegin* at the Aix-en-Provence Festival and at the Chatelet Theatre in Paris; the title role in *Carmen* with the Dallas Opera and the Opera Company of Philadelphia, and Charlotte in *Werther* at the Graz Opera. She has appeared in productions of *War and Peace*, *The Snow Maiden*, and *La Forza del Destino* at both Covent Garden and at the Metropolitan Opera with the Kirov Opera Company. Future engagements include concerts of Mahler's *Symphony No. 3* with the Duisberger Sinfoniker, staged performances of the Verdi *Requiem* at the Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin and *Carmen* at the Teatro Lirico di Cagliari. She is also planning to record with Harmonia Mundi.

### **LARISSA GERGIEVA**

An Honored National Artist of Russia, Artistic Director of the Mariinsky Academy of Young Singers and Artistic Director of the Summer Academy at the Mikkeli International Music Festival in Finland, Larissa Gergieva was born in Beltsy, Moldova. When she was seven, her family moved to Vladikavkas, in Ossetia, where she began to study music along with her brother Valery Gergiev, now principal conductor and artistic director of the Mariinsky Theatre, St. Petersburg.

Gergieva's pianistic gifts and musical insight are much in demand. She travels around the world as an accompanist and coach. She has visited San Francisco Opera on numerous occasions and has coached the principals in the Salzburg Festival's production of *Boris Godunov*, La Scala's *The Fiery Angel*, *Khovanshchina* and *The Gambler*, *Eugene Onegin* in Sapporo and Tokyo, and *The Enchantress* at the Royal Opera House in London. She also gives masterclasses in France, the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Canada, Italy, and Japan. A peerless interpreter of

the Russian repertoire, Gergieva has accompanied many up-and-coming artists, including Daniil Shtoda in his 2002 performance at Cal Performances.

### TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **Ekaterina Semenchuk & Larissa Gergieva** on **Sunday, December 5 at 3:00 p.m.** in Hertz Hall are priced at **\$46.00**. 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](http://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](http://www.calperfs.berkeley.edu).

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### CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

#### CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

**Sunday, December 5 at 3:00 p.m.**

**Hertz Hall, UC Berkeley Campus**  
Bancroft Way at College Ave., Berkeley

*Recital*

**Ekaterina Semenchuk, mezzo-soprano**

**Larissa Gergieva, piano**

**Program: To be announced.**

**Tickets:** \$46.00, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at [www.calperfs.berkeley.edu](http://www.calperfs.berkeley.edu); and at the door.