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RISING STARS OF ST. PETERSBURG'S MARIINSKY ACADEMY
MEZZO- SOPRANO EKATERINA SEMENCHUK AND BASS ALEXEI MARKOV
ACCOMPANIED BY PIANIST LARISSA GERGIEVA PERFORM
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5 AT 3:00 P.M. IN HERTZ HALL

BERKELEY, September 28, 2006 – Each year, a small, select group of musicians from Russia's Mariinsky Academy of Young Singers in St. Petersburg is chosen to tour internationally with artistic director and pianist **Larissa Gergieva**. Known for her ability to recognize and nurture artists on the cusp of international performance careers, Gergieva returns to Cal Performances with mezzo-soprano **Ekaterina Semenchuk** and bass **Alexei Markov** **Sunday, November 5 at 3:00 p.m.** at **Hertz Hall**, as part of Cal Performances' 06/07 Season Recital Series. Semenchuk, who made her Cal Performances recital debut with Gergieva in 2004, and Markov will sing a program of duets and solos announced from stage.

EKATERINA SEMENCHUK

An "artist of fire and finesse" (*San Francisco Chronicle*), **Ekaterina Semenchuk** returns to Hertz Hall after making a memorable first appearance at Cal Performances two seasons ago. She studied at the Minsk Music School and the Byelorussian Music Academy before being admitted to the Mariinsky Young Singer's Academy in 1999. Semenchuk was a prizewinner at the 1997 Dvořák Competition, being awarded diplomas for both operatic and chamber singing. In 1999, she entered the International Obraztsova Competition, winning the Hope Award and the prize for the best performance of works by contemporary Russian composers. 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.

To date, 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 Théâtre du Châtelet 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

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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 has plans to record for the Harmonia Mundi label.

ALEXEI MARKOV

Alexei Markov has studied at the Mariinsky's Young Opera Singers Academy since 2001. He has been successful in a number of competitions, including P. Lisitsian Competition in 2003, first prize in the Sixth International Rimsky-Korsakov competition of Young Opera Singers in 2004 and second prize at the first Russian Nadegda Obuhova competition in 2005. On the stage of the Mariinsky Theatre, Markov has performed the role of Don Carlos in Dargomizhsky's *The Stone Guest*. He has also toured Finland, Great Britain and Germany as a recitalist. Markov appears regularly at the Mariinsky Theatre in the Academy concerts with Larissa Gergieva.

LARISSA GERGIEVA

Pianist **Larissa Gergieva** serves as accompanist, teacher and mentor to the Artists of the Mariinsky Academy. An Honored National Artist of Russia, she was appointed artistic director of the Mariinsky Academy of Young Singers upon its formation in 1998, and charged with nurturing young Russian musical talent. She has toured with Academy artists to Switzerland, Argentina, Paris, London, New York, and across North America. This season's Cal Performances engagement is her 4th appearance in Berkeley.

Gergieva began to study music at age seven, along with her brother **Valery Gergiev**, who serves as principal conductor and artistic director of St. Petersburg's Mariinsky Theatre. Gergieva continued her piano studies at Rostov-on-Don and St. Petersburg, and played her first recital as an accompanist at the age of 15. She taught piano at the Academy of Musical Arts in Vladikavkaz and was soon invited to be *répétiteur* at the Vladikavkaz Opera. While there, she prepared singers for productions of *Tosca*, *Madama Butterfly*, *I Pagliacci* and *Carmen*, as well as many Russian operas. She also prepared Verdi's *Otello* for her brother to conduct at the

Vladikavkaz Opera. In 1987, she was appointed *répétiteur* at the Tchaikovsky Opera House in Perm, where she also prepared singers for national and international singing competitions. She continues to hold master classes in Perm for Russian and international singers, and is general director of the biennial Rimsky-Korsakov Competition for Singers in St. Petersburg. Gergieva is in demand throughout the world as an opera coach, working in Aix-en-Provence, San Francisco, Salzburg, Milan, Tokyo, London and other cities.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for the **Artists of the Mariinsky Academy: Ekaterina Semenchuk and Alexei Markov** with pianist **Larissa Gergieva** on **Sunday, November 5** at **3:00 p.m.** in Hertz Hall 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

Sunday, November 5 at 3:00 p.m.

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

Recital

Artists of the Mariinsky Academy

Ekaterina Semenchuk, mezzo-soprano

Alexei Markov, bass

Larissa Gergieva, piano

Program: Mezzo-soprano Ekaterina Semenchuk and bass Alexei Markov will perform accompanied by pianist Larissa Gergieva.

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.

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