



731 West 183rd Street, Suite 3-I New York, NY 10033 212.928.1402 www.rccny.org

RUSSIAN CHAMBER CHORUS OF NEW YORK

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE December 27, 2012

Contact: Tamara Kachanov, (212) 928-1402, press@rccny.org

THE RUSSIAN CHAMBER CHORUS OF NEW YORK CELEBRATES RACHMANINOFF'S 140TH BIRTHDAY WITH *LITURGY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOStOM*, COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED

Sunday, January 20, 2013, 3pm ©St. Joseph's Church in Greenwich Village,©
371 Sixth Avenue (between Waverly and Washington Place) ©
Tickets at the door: \$25; \$20 Students/Seniors

Wednesday, January 23, 2013, 8pm ©Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church,©
213 West 82nd Street (between Broadway and Amsterdam) ©
Tickets at the door: \$25; \$20 Students/Seniors

New York, NY, Dec 27, 2012—The Russian Chamber Chorus of New York, under the direction of Nikolai Kachanov, will perform Rachmaninoff's *Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom* in its rare, original, devout form in two performances at different venues in January.

In July 1910, Rachmaninoff created the first of his two monumental liturgical works: *Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*. It was performed in concert in November that year and was well received by music lovers but criticized by church authorities. The composition, which includes 20 movements, is unique and differs significantly from traditional Russian church music. Despite Rachmaninoff's use of the traditional liturgical order, he did not use time-honored church tunes, which for Russian churchgoers are iconic and evoke the atmosphere of the church. In that sense, his *Liturgy* could better be compared to Michelangelo's frescos or to paintings by famous Russian artists such as Repin, Surikov, and Roerich, inspired by biblical and evangelical texts.

In the *Liturgy*, Rachmaninoff's mighty genius carries his creative imagination beyond the limits of the church service, turning evangelical texts into bright, almost operatic scenes with intricate, sometimes symphonic elements of musical development. Because of its grand scale, the *Liturgy* is not usually performed in its entirety. In its January 2013 concerts, the Russian Chamber Chorus of New York will perform the *Liturgy*—complete,

unabridged, and in its devout form, including the exclamations of the Celebrant and the Deacon, as originally intended by Rachmaninoff.

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943), one of the most beloved musicians of the Romantic period, was born in Oreg, near Novgorod, and lived in St. Petersburg before pursuing his studies at the Moscow Conservatory with such well-regarded teachers as Nikolay Zverev and Alexander Siloti. He left Russia after the 1917 Revolution. In addition to being a gifted composer and conductor, he was revered for his outstanding piano technique and mesmerizing performances. He became an American citizen just prior to his death.

The Russian Chamber Chorus of New York was founded in 1984 by Artistic Director Nikolai Kachanov. Over the course of 27 years, the 30-member chorus has become America's preeminent Russian vocal ensemble and one of the world's greatest ambassadors of the Russian creative spirit. Known for its stylistic versatility, richness of sound, and subtlety of expression, RCCNY commands a wide repertoire, from ancient liturgical chants to world premieres by leading contemporary composers.

RCCNY has performed at Carnegie Hall in the American premiere of Sergei Taneyev's opera *Agamemnon* with the Manhattan Philharmonic under Peter Tiboris, and the Aquila Theatre Company featuring Olympia Dukakis; with the Czech Philharmonic under Vladimir Ashkenazy; with the Moscow Virtuosi under Vladimir Spivakov; and has participated in the American premiere of Mikis Theodorakis' opera *Electra* and in Mahler's *Symphony No. 2* with the Kirov Orchestra under Valery Gergiev. In June 2008, RCCNY appeared in a performance of Prokofiev's cantata *Alexander Nevsky* with the St. Petersburg Philharmonic, under the direction of Yuri Temirkanov.

RCCNY was profiled in Moscow's prestigious *Melodiya* magazine and in a publication of Moscow's P.I. Tchaikovsky Conservatory. The group's several CDs include Tchaikovsky's *Liturgy and Vespers*. Tchaikovsky's *Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom* was chosen by *The New York Times* among the top 10 classical CDs of 2001.

The chorus has appeared on the nationally acclaimed NPR radio program *A Prairie Home Companion* with Garrison Keillor. Russian Chamber Chorus performances of contemporary music have been hailed by critics: James Oestreich (*The New York Times*) called the chorus's "superbly prepared cantata performances" of music by Yuri Yukechev "extraordinary; richly imagined and deftly realized." Subsequently, First Art, a radio program devoted to choral music, aired Yukechev's *My Heart is Ready* across the

United States. Performances by RCCNY have been featured on *New Sounds* with John Schaefer and *Around New York* with Fred Child (WNYC-FM).

Nikolai Kachanov

Founder and Artistic Director of the Russian Chamber Chorus of New York, Nikolai Kachanov was born in Russia in the Siberian city of Barnaul, capital of the Altai Region. He holds a Ph.D. in choral conducting from the Novosibirsk Conservatory and completed post-doctoral studies at the Moscow Conservatory. In 1981, Maestro Kachanov moved to the United States with his wife, Tamara, and their son Pavel. In 1984, Nikolai and Tamara founded the Russian Chamber Chorus of New York. Kachanov is devoted to presenting new and underexposed works that illustrate Russia's rich heritage and its contemporary spirit. As a result of his commitment, audiences have been introduced to the ancient chants previously banned in his homeland (and completely unknown in America). Kachanov created the Ussachevsky Festival of Russian-American contemporary music, held at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. Kachanov has prepared large concert choruses for Vladimir Ashkenazy, Leon Botstein, Valery Gergiev, Yuri Temirkanov, and Peter Tiboris; and he participated as a coach in the 2004 Lincoln Center Festival's U.S. premiere of John Tavener's all-night vigil, *The Veil of the Temple*. Kachanov has been interviewed by Fred Child for NPR's *From the Village to the Concert*.

Web site: rccny.org

Press inquiries: Tamara Kachanov, press@rccny.org

(212) 928-1402

#

RCCNY concerts are supported, in part, by public funds for the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council; and by the Fund for Creative Communities, administered by the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council.

!