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**"BRIGHT VIGOROUS SOUNDS ...RARE BEAUTIFUL MUSIC. THE DENSE TONE AND LUMINOUS BLEND CHARACTERISTIC OF RUSSIAN CHORAL TRADITION."** -*The New York Times*, (2007)

**"EXTRAORDINARY SOUND: RICH, GRIPPING, MELODIC, POWERFUL AND UTTERLY UNFEIGNED"**. -*The Guardian* (2007)

**"STERLING CHORAL TECHNIQUE. COMPLETE INTEGRATION OF THE VOICES. AN EXTRAORDINARY VARIETY OF CHORAL TEXTURES."** -*The Wall Street Journal* (2007)



## **THE MOSCOW SRETENSKY MONASTERY CHOIR**

**DIRECT FROM MOSCOW • RETURNING TO AMERICA FOR THE FIRST TIME IN FIVE YEARS**

**OCTOBER 6 -23 2012, THE 35-VOICED MENS CHOIR RETURNS FOR A NINE-CITY, AMERICAN TOUR**

**WASHINGTON, DC • BOSTON • CHICAGO • NEW YORK • MIAMI • DALLAS • SEATTLE • SAN FRANCISCO • LOS ANGELES**

[The Moscow Sretensky Monastery Choir](#) returns to America this October for the first time since their historic 2007 world tour. This acclaimed all-male choir from the famous 600-year-old Sretensky Monastery will embark on a three-week nine-city good will tour under the direction of **Nikon Zhila**, to celebrate the five-year anniversary of the reunification of the Russian Orthodox Church. Along with performances in the nation's most prestigious concert halls, the choir will participate in Liturgies and Vespers as well as outreach activities throughout the US.

The tour program provides a unique overview of Russia's rich choral tradition. Passionate scholars of liturgical music, members of [The Moscow Sretensky Monastery Choir](#) have unearthed forgotten ancient chants and arranged them with the 21<sup>st</sup> Century perspective, to be included in the concerts. The secular selections consist of Russian, Ukrainian and Cossack folk songs as well as popular 20<sup>th</sup> century romances. One of the featured soloists, **Dmitry Beloselskiy**, was discovered by the international opera community when he performed with the choir on their 2007 world tour. This launched a solo career that brought him to the world's leading opera houses including last year's productions of *Nabucco* at The Metropolitan Opera where he appeared in the role of Zaccaria, and *Boris Godunov* at the Bolshoi Theatre where he played the title role.

"The Library of Congress is pleased to welcome back to our historic Coolidge Auditorium the Moscow Sretensky Monastery Choir as part of our 2012-2013 concert season," said the Librarian of Congress James. H. Billington, the noted scholar of Russian culture. "It is appropriate that this extraordinary choir is beginning its American tour with sacred music, since the 600-year-old Monastic oral tradition represented the beginning and the basis for Russia's distinctive musical tradition."

**Archimandrite Tikhon**, the Abbot of the Moscow Sretensky Monastery and the Executive Secretary of the Russian Orthodox Church Patriarchal Council for Culture, will participate in the cultural events connected with the tour. Fr. Tikhon is also the author of a Russian national bestseller, *Everyday Saints*, which documents a remarkable spiritual journey. Released in Russia in 2011, it has surpassed in sales and popularity all other bestselling books in the nation. Over one million copies were sold in less than a year. The book has been translated into English for a US release by Pokrov Publications in September 2012. The book launch will take place October 5 at 11 AM at the Library of Congress. Proceeds from the book's sales will be used to build a memorial cathedral in Moscow dedicated to the victims of the Communist regime.

The editor of the book, **Mother Cornelia**, an American-born, Orthodox nun, who resides in Moscow will also travel with and look after the choir on their return to the US. A graduate of Indiana University Bloomington, Mother Cornelia is the English Editor of the largest Internet resource on Orthodox Christianity in the former Soviet Union ([www.pravoslavie.ru/eng](http://www.pravoslavie.ru/eng)).

The tour will start with a by-invitation-only performance at the Library of Congress on October 6 at 8:00 PM. Members of the diplomatic corps, academics, cultural leaders and high-profile representatives of the Russian-speaking community are expected to attend. The Russian Consulate General hosts a special reception on October 15, prior to the choir's Carnegie Hall debut.

The complete tour schedule of the **Moscow Sretensky Monastery Choir** is as follows:

[Monday, October 8 at 7.30pm - Washington, DC - Kennedy Center/Terrace Theatre](#)

[Tuesday, October 9 at 7.30pm - Boston, MA - Cutler Majestic](#)

[Thursday, October 11 at 8pm - Chicago, IL - Symphony Hall](#)

[Monday, October 15 at 7pm - New York - Carnegie Hall/Perelman Stage](#)

[Wednesday, October 17 at 8pm - Miami, FL - Adrienne Arscht Center for the Performing Arts](#)

[Friday, October 19 at 8pm - Dallas, TX - Majestic Theatre](#)

[Sunday, October 21 at 7.30pm - Seattle, WA - Meany Hall](#)

[Monday, October 22 at 7pm - San Francisco, CA - Marines Memorial](#)

[Tuesday, October 23 at 8pm - Los Angeles, CA - Royce Hall](#)

"The artistry of the Moscow Sretensky Monastery Choir is deeply influenced by the rich musical and spiritual traditions that have developed in the Christian world's 2,000-year history", says Nikita Mikhalkov, Russia's most successful filmmaker, Academy Award winner and pre-eminent cultural figure, who regularly attends the divine services at the Sretensky Monastery. "This choir combines the Russian Orthodox experience with impeccable technique, considerable talent and youthful energy of the singers. Their rich and unique background places the choir firmly among the best vocal ensembles in the world."

From the U.S. the choir will continue on to China to perform at the Beijing Music Festival organized by Maestro Long Yu, which includes a concert in the Forbidden City.

## MORE ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**The Sretensky Monastery Choir** was created at a fateful moment in Russian history when full-scale spiritual life became possible once again after decades of persecution. Based in a 14th century monastery in the heart of Moscow, it continues the rich tradition of church chants. Alongside the Divine Services in the monastery, the choir often sings at services led by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia in the cathedrals of the Kremlin. The choir also has taken on the mission of researching, arranging and interpreting early Russian music that was banned under the Soviet regime. Its repertoire also includes songs of the 20th century, most notably from the times of both World Wars, drawing on the full spectrum of Russia's choral tradition. A widely recognized and enthusiastically followed ensemble in its native country, the Sretensky Monastery Choir has performed at the UNESCO headquarters, the "Auditorium" hall in papal residence in Vatican Notre Dame de Paris, Chicago Symphony Hall, Library of Congress, Cadogan Hall in London, as well as a number of international music festivals. For more information please visit <http://www.camimusic.com/details.asp?webid=2282>.

**Nikon Zhila** (Music Director and Conductor) was born in 1976 in a priest's family in Sergiev Posad (then Zagorsk), just outside of Moscow. Since his childhood he was singing in church choirs of Trinity-Sergius Lavra, one of the most important spiritual centers of Russia. He graduated from the Prokofiev's Moscow Regional Music School in 1995, and went on to study choral conducting at the Russian Gnessin's Academy of Music. Since 2000 Nikon Zhila worked as a chorister in the choir of the Moscow Sretensky Monastery. While serving in the Armed Forces in 2001-2002, he performed with the Military Song and Dance Ensemble. Moscow Sretensky Monastery invited Nikon Zhila as a regent of the monastery choir in 2005. N. Zhila has reorganized activities of the collective, while saving its best traditions. Talented singers, composers, arrangers were invited to cooperate with the team, the repertoire was expanded and revised. The choir began to sing wartime songs a cappella for the first time. The choir began to work on the studio albums recording and maintained an active concert schedule, along with services in the monastery. Since 2005, the collective becomes the main chorus, accompanying the Patriarch's worship, as well as his visits to the Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church in Russia and abroad. The choir has participated in the most important events in the life of the Russian Orthodox Church in recent years, such as: co- consecration of the Church of New Martyrs and Confessors by Russian Patriarch Alexy and Metropolitan Laurus, a concert devoted to 90th - anniversary of the restoration of service in the Patriarchal Orthodox Church in 2007, a concert celebrating the opening of the first Orthodox church in Rome, the consecration of the church of Saints Constantine and Helen in Istanbul (Turkey 2009), concert "St. Irene" for the Holy Patriarchs Bartholomew Ecumenical and Moscow and all Russia Kirill at the historic church in Istanbul. In 2005 the choir participated in the reburial of the remains of White Army General A.Denikin and philosopher I.Ilyin, and accompanied the funeral service in Paris and Moscow. The Chorus under the Nikon's direction has represented Russia more than once in the foreign travels: In 2006 the choir gave a concert in Belgrade for the President of Serbia and in the "Auditorium" hall in papal residence in Vatican. In 2008, the choir performed in major concert halls of Central and South America as part of the cultural program, "Days of Russia in Latin America".

**Dmitry Beloselskiy** (*soloist*) was born in 1975 in Pavlograd, Ukraine. He graduated from the Russian Gnesin's Academy of Music in 2001. Dmitry Beloselskiy, while being a student, had been invited to the Moscow Academic Chamber Choir conducted by Vladimir Minin, where soon he became a leading soloist. Even then it became clear for both professionals and music lovers, that Russia has a new brilliant performer of vocal works of various genres - from chamber music to works by major forms, of both Russian and foreign composers. His repertoire includes song cycles and choral miniatures, folk songs and opera arias. Together with the choir singer, performed at major concert halls in Russia and abroad, and has toured in Germany, France, Japan, USA, Argentina and other countries. D.Beloselskiy performed solo parts in the productions of the opera festival in Bregenz (Austria) for several seasons. Dmitry Beloselskiy was distinguished by the Ministry of Culture and Mass Communications of Russian Federation for the work of many years and outstanding contribution to the art. Dmitry Beloselskiy has a unique deep, soft bass-baritone voice, which, combined with intelligent artistry, wonderful sense of proportion and subtle style of the singer leads him into the category of rarest performers not only on native but also on the world stage. Even well known songs and ballads, performed by him, sounds like new, deep and expressive. Critics have called the mastery of the singer as perfect. Dmitry Beloselskiy works as a leading soloist of the choir of the Moscow Sretensky Monastery since 2005. During this time, the singer performed at concert halls on four continents. Together with the choir artist made two tours round the world within the confines of the mission of the Russian Orthodox Church. During the Days of Russia in Latin America (2008), and round the world tour after the unification of the Russian Orthodox Church (2007), he was applauded by the spectators in Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Buenos Aires, Asuncion, New York, Washington, DC, Boston, Toronto, Melbourne, Sydney, Berlin and London. An important event in the life of the singer happened in 2007 - he was awarded prizewinner of the II International Competition for the name of P.I. Tchaikovsky. Today Dmitry Beloselskiy, remaining a soloist of the choir of the Moscow Sretensky, leads his own concert activity, cooperates actively with well-known Russian and foreign conductors and record companies, such as «Deutsche Grammophon». Dmitry Beloselskiy's concert activity will never remain without attention and response of the Russian and foreign press.

## HISTORY OF SRETEENSKY MONASTERY

Sretensky Monastery is one of the most ancient monasteries in Moscow. It was founded in 1395 in honor of the city's victory over Tartar invaders. In 1917, the brothers of the monastery were arrested by the Soviet authorities and exiled to prison camps. Many were executed.

In 1994 the monastery was returned to the Russian Orthodox Church, at which time the Sretensky Choir was organized. The Choir sings the Divine Services several days per week in the Monastery church, using ancient Byzantine and Russian chant. It frequently participates in the Services celebrated by the Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia in the Dormition Cathedral, located in the Moscow Kremlin.

The choir's creative and concert life is under the constant patronage of the monastery's Abbot, Archimandrite Tikhon (Shevkunov). Its members are an integral part of the monastery community, a fact that influences the repertory and the style of its rendition. The choir's artistic director and conductor is Nikon Zhila, a graduate of the Russian Gnessin Academy of Music.

On May 17, 2007, the day of the Ascension of the Lord, the long-awaited Act of Canonical Communion between the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia and the Moscow Patriarchate was signed in the Christ the Savior Cathedral in Moscow, Russia. The US tour of Moscow Sretensky Choir is dedicated to that unique and memorable event that put an end to nine decades of bitter division within the Russian Orthodox Church which began as Communist rule took hold after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917.



## THE MOSCOW SRETEENSKY MONASTERY CHOIR

PHOTO EDITORS: High-res images of at [www.camimusic.com/choir](http://www.camimusic.com/choir)

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