



Joan's Letter

Dear Friends of the Mariinsky,

Since Sandy and I were elected Co-Chairs of the Foundation this June we have gained a new appreciation of its unique cultural and musical focus and its mission to be an apolitical force internationally, especially in the interests of improved relations between America and Russia. We succeed Donald M. Kendall, now Chairman Emeritus of the Foundation, who, as Foundation Chair for four years, set the stage and pointed the way for the Foundation to pursue its mission with renewed focus and energy. Sandy and I hope to "carry the torch" with equal aplomb.

I was thrilled this summer to attend the Stars of White Nights Festival of the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, to visit that beautiful city, and to witness the variety and expanse of opera, ballet and symphonic repertoire that Valery Gergiev programs. For ten weeks each summer the Festival is one of Europe's largest and most successful festivals and experiencing it with the natural phenomenon of "white nights" make for incomparable and exhilarating evenings.

The Foundation supports bringing the "Mariinsky magic" to the United States each season, most recently the November Prokofiev Festival of four special evenings in Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center in New York along with concerts in nine other American cities. While in America, the Mariinsky Orchestra presented a concert at the Foundation's White Nights Gala at the American Museum of Natural History. The Gala audience celebrated Maestro Gergiev's twenty years as General and Artistic Director of the Theatre and heard a spectacular concert by the Mariinsky Orchestra with special guest Metropolitan Opera Star Thomas Hampson.

Valery and Sandy presented the Mariinsky's "In the Spirit of Philanthropy Award" to the CEO of Moscow's Foreign Trade Bank (VTB), Andrei Kostin, a longtime friend and supporter of both the Mariinsky Theatre and the White Nights Foundation of America. Previous winners of the Award are Don Kendall, Placido Domingo, Victor Vekselberg, Yoko Nagae Ceschina, James Wolfensohn and my husband and Co-Chair Sandy Weill.

Please join us in support of this unique foundation and please join us in St. Petersburg this summer for the XVI Stars of White Nights Festival.

Joan H. Weill
Co-Chair
WNFA Board of Directors

2008 White Nights Gala

American Museum of Natural History

The White Nights Foundation of America held its 2008 White Nights Gala Saturday evening, November 15 at one of the world's greatest scientific and cultural institutions, the architecturally spectacular American Museum of Natural History in New York City.

Chaired by Frederick Iseman with Vice Chairs Sid and Mercedes Bass, the Foundation celebrated the 20th anniversary of Valery Gergiev, General and Artistic Director of the State Academic Mariinsky Theatre. Recently WNET and the BBC premiered documentaries on Maestro Gergiev and in November the South Bank Show in



Milstein Hall of Ocean Life

London premiered a documentary on the Theatre's 225-year history.

Maestro Gergiev will be the subject of a 90 minute feature documentary film

(Continued on page 3)

WNFA Welcomes Frederick J. Iseman

Frederick Iseman was elected to WNFA's Board of Directors on September 20, 2008 and served as Chair of the Foundation's November 15th Gala at the Museum of Natural History.

Mr. Iseman is the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of CI Capital Partners LLC (formerly Caxton-Iseman Capital), which he founded in 1993 in partnership with Caxton Associates. CI Capital Partners' portfolio companies are businesses in industrial gas distribution, health care services, consumer goods manufacturing, industrial products distribution, housing components, heating and ventilation, and Federal information technology. Mr. Iseman is chairman of six of CI Capital Partners' companies. He is also on the Board of Directors of Boston Properties.

Mr. Iseman is on the Boards of Directors of the Metropolitan Opera, the Municipal Art Society and the Board of Trustees of Carnegie Hall. He is a significant supporter of medical research at Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center, including the Nathaniel Wharton Fund for Research in Brain, Body and Behavior, and the Taub Institute for Brain Research. He has published articles in *The New York Times*,

Harper's Magazine, *The New Yorker*, and his writing has been anthologized in *The Inquiring Reader* (Holt, Rinehart).



In addition, Mr. Iseman is a Board member of two large foreign aid NGOs, the International Rescue Committee and the Academy for Educational Development. He is a member of the International Council of the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs (John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University) and is on the Advisory Board of the Nuclear Threat Initiative. Mr. Iseman is a major supporter of the Yale Center for Genocide Studies, the Yale Center for the Study of Globalization's programs on nuclear proliferation, and Stanford University's Preventive Defense Fund.

He is member of the Council on Foreign Relations' Chairman's Council and their Independent Task Force on U.S. Nuclear Weapons Posture, chaired by Dr. William Perry and Brent Scowcroft.





White Nights Foundation of America

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WNFA's Support of the Mariinsky Theatre

With grants totaling \$600,000 thus far in 2008, the White Nights Foundation of America has proudly supported the Mariinsky Theatre's VIII International Ballet Festival; purchased the licensing rights to Balanchine's *Jewels* for a forthcoming video recording and DVD release and sponsored the Mariinsky Orchestra's North American All-Prokofiev tour.

2007 was an extraordinary year, where through the generosity of friends of the Foundation, WNFA provided over \$2.9 million in support of the Mariinsky Theatre including:

- \$895,000 to sponsor two sold-out cycles of the Kirov Opera's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* at the Metropolitan Opera of New York
- \$350,000 in support of the Mariinsky Orchestra's East Coast Tour
- \$66,000 to purchase a production of Janáček's *Makropolous Case* for the Mariinsky Opera
- \$1,500,000 in support of *Maestro: Portrait of Valery Gergiev*
- \$155,300 in instrument purchases for the Mariinsky Orchestra
- \$2,800 Scholarship for Mariinsky Academy of Young Singers

White Nights Foundation of America

Mission Statement

The White Nights Foundation of America was formed in 1999 to support the activities of the Mariinsky Theatre's constituent institutions: The Mariinsky Opera, Ballet, Orchestra, the Academy for Young Singers and the Young Musicians' Orchestra.

The White Nights Foundation of America's mission includes a commitment to strengthen and expand the cultural, educational and business relationships between Russia and the United States and to be a positive, apolitical force for peace.

The White Nights Foundation of America, Inc. (WNFA) is a not-for-profit organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Charitable contributions are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

VIII Moscow Easter Festival

April 19 - May 9, 2009

Dear Friends!

During this most luminous and joyful holiday of Orthodox Russia, the Moscow Easter Festival again invites true music lovers to sample the treasures of world musical culture. For seven years this ambitious forum, which has the highest international standing, has been uncovering new facets in the art of music and its performance. The festival remains a unique event that truly belongs to Moscow. It harmoniously combines a wide-ranging symphonic program worthy of the capital's diversity with the bells of old Moscow while it sets an awareness of international music trends in counterpoint with respect for our own traditions. Dozens of symphony, choir, and bell concerts, a vast regional programme, stars of the international stage and groups from many countries – all these give the schedule of the Moscow Easter Festival a unique character.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to the honorable Maestro Valery Gergiev and to the musicians of the Mariinsky Theatre. Thanks to their enthusiasm and boundless energy these Easter celebrations annually involve hundreds and thousands of spectators in Moscow and other Russian cities, as well as millions of people in the TV and radio audience.

I would like to wish the guests and artists of the Festival good health, a springtime mood, and the joy from creating something together. May great music bring harmony into our troubled world on this bright holiday.

*The Mayor of Moscow
Yuri Luzhkov*

2008 White Nights Gala

American Museum of Natural History

(Continued from page 1)

“You cannot start without me” to be entered into international film festivals between January and June 2009.

Principal Speaker for the evening, Clive Gillinson of Carnegie Hall said of Maestro:

“He has always sought to make the Mariinsky Opera Company the best in the world. He initiated and led the creation of the superb new concert hall in St. Petersburg, including the most contemporary technology for disseminating widely what they do.

“He has presided over an amazing development of repertoire – reintroducing the Ring Cycle in Russia... and he has also taken his Ring Cycle all around the world.

“He has made a remarkable commitment to Russian music; He really has transformed the world’s appreciation of Russian music, including long-neglected Russian masterpieces.

“He has founded many International Festivals – in Finland, Rotterdam, and Moscow. He was the inspiration and driving force behind the St. Petersburg White Nights Festival, established in 1993.

“In addition to the Mariinsky and the LSO, he is in demand by orchestras all around the world – and appears regularly with the Vienna Philharmonic in Vienna and on tour.

“And I promise, there is a lot more – education, new music, nurturing of brilliant young singers at the Mariinsky, and the role that music can play in the relationships between Nations.”

Maestro Gergiev quickly turned all attention away from himself, asking WNFA Co-Chair Sanford I. Weill to help him present the Mariinsky’s “In the Spirit of Philanthropy Award” to the CEO of VTB (Moscow’s Foreign Trade Bank and Global Sponsor of the Mariinsky) Andrei Kostin. Mr. Kostin and Mr. Weill both spoke eloquently of the importance of music and art in bringing people of different cultures together and in building better relations between countries. Previous awardees present were Donald M. Kendall, WNFA Chair Emeritus and Sandy Weill.

The highlight of the evening was a concert led first by the Mariinsky Orchestra’s 14-member brass ensemble, followed by the Mariinsky Orchestra and Metropolitan Opera Star Thomas Hampson. Those in attendance were then presented with an excerpt from the upcoming documentary feature film on Maestro Gergiev’s musical life entitled “You cannot start without me.”

Among the distinguished guests were HRH Princess Firyal of Jordan, Sir and Lady Weidenfeld, Ambassador Vitaly Churkin and Hon. Sergey Garmonin.



For more information about the White Nights Foundation of America, please contact Executive Director, Tracie L. Williams: 212-757-9632 tracie.l.williams@wnfa.org Please visit our website www.wnfa.org



1. Valery Gergiev, Sandy Weill, Andrei Kostin 2. Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Hampson 3. Don Kendall, Elaine Wolfensohn, Bim Kendall 4. Fred Iseman, Princess Firyal 5. Thomas Hampson 6. Amb. Vitaly Churkin, Vassily Titov, Andrei Kostin 7. Avery McGraw; Katie Brandes, Gwendolyn Meyer 8. Valery Gergiev, Gwendolyn Meyer, Christopher Meyer 9. Clive Gillinson 10. Valery Gergiev and the Mariinsky Orchestra

Photos Credit: Chris Lee

Mariinsky Ballet on Tour

October 1 – 19, 2008 saw a three city Mariinsky Ballet tour (Chicago, Costa Mesa and Berkeley) in productions of *Giselle*, *Raymonda*, *La Bayadere*, *Paquita* and *Don Quixote*.

Hosting the Ballet for its sixth season in Costa Mesa, its third season at the new Segerstrom Hall, the Orange County Performing Arts Center:

Mere mention of the name Kirov is enough to excite ballet fans with an almost electric tingle of anticipation. In part its because of ballet has unbroken links to the great 19th century era of Russian ballet classicism. Then there's the image of the celebrated female corps moving in poetic unanimity and the vision of ballerinas so secure in their technique – so far beyond technique in fact – that body and spirit unite in pure expression. And, of course there's the aristocratic grandeur of the Kirov's sumptuous productions, delivered with the unmistakable authority of a birthright.

~ Orange County Performing Arts Center REVUE,
July 2008

Of the performances at Cal Performances, Berkley:

The world famous Mariinsky (Kirov) Ballet of St. Petersburg – the eternal bastion of classical dance brought to Cal Performances a constellation of Russian stars in its program of Petipa's mixed repertory and a full-length Don Quixote last week.

~ Art and Entertain Me, October 2008

I thought I'd died and woken up in a different era of ballet history. The Kirov Ballet overwhelmed a standing-ovation crowd at UC Berkley's Zellerbach Hall with a Don Quixote that was sensationally spirited, sunny, even swarthy – in a word, blood-pumping. Don Quixote is classical ballet at its most free and joyous – or at least when the Kirov dances it.

~ San Francisco Gate, October 2008



Photo Credit: V. Baranovsky




Photo Credit: N. Razina



Photo Credit: N. Razina

Clockwise from top: Don Quixote; Evgenia Obraztsova, Vladimir Shklyarov; Alina Somova, Leonid Sarafanov

The Ballet's final American performances of the 2008 – 2009 season were at the Dorothy Chandler Pavillion in Los Angeles. and at the Kennedy Center in Washington DC. 

Ballet Russe Exhibit at Sotheby's Paris

September 2008

September 17 - 23, 2008, the eve of the 100th anniversary of the creation of the Ballets Russes, Sotheby's Paris produced an exceptional exhibition of works lent mainly by French, British and Russian private collectors, museums and foundations, based on an original idea by Ravenscourt Galleries.


Some 150 paintings, designs, costumes, theatre decors, drawings, sculptures, photographs, manuscripts, and programs were displayed, retracing the key moments in the history of the Ballets Russes - a company that for twenty years made a revolutionary impact on 20th century theatre and dance, and continues to fascinate to this day.

Conceived in St Petersburg, then brought to life in Paris, the Ballets Russes was an exceptional phenomenon in the history of European theatre and dance. Under choreographer Mikhail Fokine, dance was to involve far more than athletic prowess, becoming a vehicle for self-expression and emotion, backed by decors and costumes designed by frontline artists. Meanwhile impresario Serge Diaghilev signed up the biggest names from the Russian imperial theatres - the Mariinsky

in St Petersburg and Bolshoi in Moscow. This outlet for Russian creativity, mixing sophistication and sensuality in music, dance, art and drama, swiftly enjoyed a runaway success.

The debut performance, an opera in 1908, was followed in 1909 by the first of many ballets, among them *Polovetsian Dances* (1909), *Sheherazade* (1910), *Petrushka* (1911), *Le Spectre de la Rose* (1911), *Parade* (1917) and *Le Train Bleu* (1924).

In 1911 Diaghilev established a permanent troupe, and embarked on international tours to London, Monte Carlo and Germany, soon followed by South America and the United States. As a private, independent company, the Ballets Russes travelled everywhere without being attached to any one venue, although their Paris season remained an important annual event.

Until his death in 1929, Diaghilev maintained a creative team of international talent that at various times included avant-garde composers like Igor Stravinsky, Maurice Ravel, Erik Satie and Serge Prokofiev. 

All-Prokofiev World Tour: 2008/2009 Season

Valery Gergiev has brought many Russian composers to the forefront of the musical world. Jonathan Mills of the Edinburgh International Festival calls him “more than just a conductor, he is a conductor and a proselytizer.” In 2006 Mr. Gergiev embarked on a centennial tour of the works of Shostakovich. In the 2008-2009 season, he will once again promote an integral composer of Russian music, Sergei Prokofiev. His Fall 2008 North American tour with the Mariinsky Orchestra is focused on Prokofiev’s works, touring 9 cities with 14 concerts, and the London Symphony Orchestra is embarking on a 41 concert international tour of 14 countries. Both the Mariinsky Orchestra and the London Symphony Orchestra are a part of Lincoln Center’s Russian Dreams series, a season long focus on Prokofiev’s music.

Sergei Prokofiev is one of the greatest Russian composers of the 20th Century and is a product of the St. Petersburg Conservatory. During his time Prokofiev’s works were considered to be ultra-modern and innovative. His most famous work, the orchestral score to the ballet *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) was a commission from the Mariinsky Theatre. *Peter and the Wolf* (1936), an orchestral suite written for children, is also well known.

Prokofiev, though well known for the aforementioned works, wrote seven symphonies, nine operas, fifteen film scores, eleven cantatas, and forty-eight orchestral suites in addition to numerous sonatas and solo instrumental works. From a strictly musical perspective these works merit a place among the masterpieces of recent times, but the historic perspective adds considerable merit – many of these works were commissioned and composed under Stalinist Russia, where music was strictly regulated according to communist ideals.

Remaining U.S. Performances

Valery Gergiev and the London Symphony Orchestra

San Francisco, Davies Symphony Hall: March 15 – 16
San Diego, Copley Symphony Hall: March 17
Costa Mesa, Segerstrom Hall: March 18 – 19
Chicago, Orchestra Hall: March 22
New York, Lincoln Center: March 23 – 24 and 29 – 30
Boston, Symphony Hall: March 25
Newark, New Jersey Performing Arts Center: March 27
Washington DC, Kennedy Center: March 28

Prokofiev Chronology

1891 April 23, born into an affluent family in Sontsovka, Ukraine. Third but only surviving child of Sergey Alekseyevich Prokofiev and Mariya Grigoryevna Zhitkova.

1895 Begins to take piano lessons from his mother, who encourages him to compose.

1900 Composes first opera, *The Giant*.

1902 Begins receiving composition lessons from composer and pianist Reinhold Gliere.

1904 Begins composition studies at St. Petersburg Conservatory, taking orchestration lessons with Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov.

1908 Makes his debut as a composer: seven piano pieces performed in St. Petersburg as part of the series Evenings of Contemporary Music. The following year he completes studies in composition, begins to train as a concert pianist, and studies conducting with Nikolay Tcherepnin.

1910 First public performance in Moscow, playing Sonata No. 1, Op. 1 and Four Etudes, Op. 2.

1912 Piano Concerto No. 1 in D-flat.

1913 Performance of Piano Concerto No. 2 in G minor condemned by conservative critics, but reviewed favorably by a few progressives.

1914 Completes conservatory studies, performing his Piano Concerto No. 1 for his piano examination, for which he wins first prize. Travels to London and is introduced to Serge Diaghilev.

1917 Completes Symphony No. 1 in D (“Classical”); Violin Concerto No. 1 in D; the opera *The Gambler*, based on Dostoevsky’s novel Russian Revolution. The following year he emigrates to New York.

1919 Completes *The Love for Three Oranges*, commissioned by the Chicago Opera; *The Tale of the Buffoon* commissioned by Diaghilev.

1923 Marries Spanish singer Lina Codina; moves to Paris. Premiere of Violin Concerto No. 1 in D under Koussevitzky. Soviet Union established.

1925 Completes Symphony No. 2 in G minor. Three years later, completes Symphony No. 3 in C minor.

1930 Symphony No. 4 in C commissioned for and premiered at the 50th anniversary celebration of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. The following year, he completes Piano Concerto No. 4 in B-flat.

1935 Completes the piano score for *Romeo and Juliet*, which has been altered to end happily. Political interference forces Prokofiev to make numerous revisions before the ballet premieres three years later in Brno with the tragic ending.

1936 Permanently relocates to the Soviet Union from France. The following year he completes the *Cantata for the Twentieth Anniversary of the October Revolution*, which presents texts by Marx, Stalin, and Lenin; it goes unperformed, as it was judged to fall short of the criteria for “socialist realism.”

1938 Forfeits his passport. Composes film score for *Alexander Nevsky*, directed by Eisenstein.

1941 Is evacuated from Moscow after German invasion and subsequently lives in Nalchik, Tbilisi, Alma-Ata, and Perm. Suffers a heart attack, which instigates the continuous decline in his health.

1942 Collaborates with Eisenstein on *Ivan the Terrible*; completes *War and Peace*.

1943 Returns to Moscow. One year later completes Symphony No. 5 in B-flat and the ballet *Cinderella*.

1947 Completes Symphony No. 6 in E-flat minor.

1948 Marries Mira Mendelson, a writer. Works largely banned from performance by political mandate; writes letter of penitence admitting to artistic errors; Lina arrested and sent to labor camp.

1949 Performance ban lifted in a decree signed by Stalin, although due to critical humiliations regarding his works and his increasingly bad health, Prokofiev’s rate of composition slows drastically.

1952 Completes Symphony No. 7 in C-sharp minor.

1953 Dies on March 5 in Moscow, on the same day as Stalin.

Prokofiev Timeline reprinted with permission from Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts

~ The Star-Ledger, Friday November 14, 2008

"It would be hard to imagine a more authentic, powerful performance of the "Sylvian Suite" than that on Sunday. Gergiev - conducting without a baton or podium, on a level with his musicians - summoned a vast palette of color, applied with dynamism. The music ranged evocatively from the ethereal to the volcanic, from the play of wind and water in a magical flute melody to the rush of a thousand hooves in the climax."



White Nights Foundation of America
200 West 57th Street, Suite 304
New York, New York 10019



Upcoming Events

All-Prokofiev Tour U.S.A.

London Symphony Orchestra
Valery Gergiev, Principal Conductor

San Francisco, Davies Symphony Hall:
March 15 – 16, 2009

New York, Lincoln Center:
March 23 – 24, 29 – 30, 2009

San Diego, Copley Symphony Hall:
March 17, 2009

Boston, Symphony Hall:
March 25, 2009

Costa Mesa, Segerstrom Hall:
March 18 – 19, 2009

Newark, New Jersey Performing Arts Center:
March 27, 2009

Chicago, Orchestra Hall:
March 22, 2009

Washington DC, Kennedy Center:
March 28, 2009

2009 Mariinsky Theatre Festivals

Festival Maslenitsa
at the Mariinsky Theatre
February 23 - March 1, 2009

International Festival Brass Evenings
at the Mariinsky
February 11 - 15, March 19 - 22, 2009

International Ballet Festival Mariinsky
March 14 - 22, 2009

VIII Moscow Easter Festival
April 19 - May 9, 2009

XVII International Festival Stars
of the White Nights
May 21 - July 12, 2009

Mariinsky Theatre
1 Theatre Square
St Petersburg 190000
Russian Federation

Mariinsky Theatre Concert Hall
20 Pisareva Street
entrance from 37 Dekabristov St
St Petersburg 190000
Russian Federation

Box Office
Email: tickets@mariinsky.ru
Telephone: +7 812 326 4141