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ADELAIDE  
FESTIVAL

1-17 MARCH 2019

MUSIC / RUSSIA

# Sretensky Monastery Choir

AUSTRALIAN EXCLUSIVE

## FIVE CENTURIES OF CONTINUOUS CHORAL TRADITION...

could have withered and died when the Bolsheviks exiled the monks from Moscow's Sretensky monastery. But when glasnost saw it return to a functioning place of worship and the re-formed choir let fly with their unique and massive sound, any lingering ghosts of the dark times fled.

To hear these quintessentially Russian male voices in the flesh is hair-raising: tenors soaring over the luminous baritone texture and of course those incomparable bassi profondi, who seem to conjure a sound from the earth's very core.

**Duration** 1hr 40mins,  
including one 20min interval

**3 - 4 Mar / Adelaide Town Hall**

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## The Basis of the Choir...

is the seminarians, seminary students and graduates of the Moscow Sretensky Seminary and Academy. No less important part of the collective are the vocalists from the Moscow Academy of Choral Art, Moscow Conservatory and the Gnessins Russian Academy of Music. There are 30 members in the choir, each of them a godsend for the creative collective.

There are talented composers and arrangers among them: Fedor Stepanov, Alexandr Amerkhanov, Andrey Poltorukhin, Roman Maslennikov; and first-class soloists: Dmitry Beloselsky, Mikhail Miller, Mikhail Turkin, Ivan Skrlnikov, Petr Gudkov, Alexandr Korogod, Alexey Tatarintsev... but each member of the choir is an obedient instrument in Regent Nikon Stepanovich Zhila's hands, converting the consonance of voices into a resonant, living organism.

In addition to regular Divine Services at the monastery, the Sretensky choir sings in the most solemn Patriarchal Services in the Moscow Kremlin, and participates in the international music competitions and missionary journeys of the Russian Orthodox Church.

## Director and Composer Fedor Stepanov

Fedor Mikhailovich Stepanov, born in 1985 to a family of musicians, entered the Moscow Boys Choir at seven years of age. As a member of the boys choir the musician-beginner went on tour of Canada and USA in November and December 1999, with the Christmas concert program.

Studying for five years as a young musician, he attended a course of composition at the Moscow conservatory, under the leadership of Professor Yuri Borisovich Abdokov; and entered the class of choral conducting at the Moscow Choral School of A.V. Sveshnikov.

Joining the Sretensky Monastery Choir as a chorister in 2002, he was subsequently appointed Director of the collective. His works as a composer/arranger include many arrangements of wartime songs, love songs, Russian folk songs and songs of the peoples of the world; religious and secular compositions for the choir and soloists, notably 'Three moods' for clarinet and piano, 'Sonata for violin and piano', and a series of vocal compositions, 'Christmas chants' for choir, organ and bells.

In 2006 Stepanov became a laureate of the B. A. Tchaikovsky Award for 'Sonata for violin and Piano'. In 2012 Stepanov created and directed the 'Christmas Chants' concert for choir, organ and bells at the International House of Music, a significant event for the composer.

Fedor Mikhailovich actively participates in the life of the Moscow Sretensky monastery, successfully combining administrative duties with his creative achievements. His compositions have been performed many times at various music halls of the Russian capital and beyond.

**The Choir Regent  
Nikon Zhila, Honored  
Artist Of Russia**

Nikon Stepanovich Zhila was born to a priest's family in Sergiev Posad – then Zagorsk town – in Moscow Region, in November 1976, and during his childhood sang in the church choirs of Holy Trinity-St. Sergius Lavra.

He graduated from the Prokofiev Moscow Regional Music School in 1995, and in 2001, the Faculty of the choral conducting at the Gnessins Russian Academy of Music. While serving in the Armed Forces in 2001-2002, he performed in the Academic Song and Dance Ensemble of Internal Troops of the Ministry for Internal Affairs. The Moscow Sretensky Monastery invited Zhila to become a Regent of the monastery choir in 2005. Zhila reorganized activities of the collective while saving its best traditions. Talented singers, composers, arrangers were invited to cooperate with the collective; the repertoire was expanded and revised. The choir began to sing wartime songs a capella for the first time, as well as work on studio albums, recording and carry on an active concert schedule along with services at the monastery.

The annual performance at the Easter Festival has become a tradition for the collective. The choir has often been invited to sing to the foreign delegations and guests of the President of the Russian Federation. All concerts under the control of choir regent Nikon Stepanovich Zhila enjoy the same success with audiences and music critics.

The Sretensky Monastery choir has recorded several music albums under his artistic direction, with spiritual hymns and songs of the best classical and folk repertoire, including: 'Lenten Fast Compositions', 'Great Week', 'All Night Vigil', 'I See a Wonderful Freedom', 'Favorite Songs' and 'Present for Friends'.

**Сретенский  
монастырь**  
**Sretensky  
Monastery**

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Over 600 years  
of choral tradition

Moscow's Sretensky Monastery, founded more than 600 years ago, in 1395 – some sources say 1397 – to commemorate Moscow's salvation from Tartar invaders, is one of Russia's most important religious sites.

Originally located close to the present-day Red Square, in the early 16th Century it was moved northeast to what is now Bolshaya Lubyanka Street. The monastery gave its name to adjacent streets and byways, namely Sretenka Street, Sretensky Boulevard, Sretensky Lane, Sretensky Dead-end, and Sretensky Gates Square.

Following the 1917 revolution, the brothers of the monastery were arrested by Soviet authorities and exiled to prison camps; many were executed. During the Soviet era the monastery was practically emptied, but in 1994 under the glasnost policy, the monks returned and Archimandrite Tikhon was appointed its abbot...

...and the re-formed choir again let fly with its unique and massive sound, dispelling the ghosts of the dark times, its 42 male voices once again chanting and singing the Divine Liturgy of the Russian Orthodox church.

## Program

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Ancient pre-Western chant, liturgical masterworks and beautifully arranged folk songs (some very familiar) delivered with profound emotion and at times terrifying intensity.

### Part I

#### NOW ALL THE HEAVENLY POWERS

*Ancient chant, harmonization by Grigory Lvovsky*

#### BLESS THE LORD O MY SOUL

*Music by Viktor Kalinnikov, arranged by Archimandrite Matthew (Mormyl)*

#### MOTHER WAS KNOWN TO BE MORE THAN NATURE

*Dogmatist of 7th voice, echoes chant, harmonization of Aleksander Kastalsky*

#### COUNCIL OF THE ETERNAL

*Music by Pavel Chesnokov*

#### THE HAIL MARY PRAYER

*Music by Sergey Rachmaninov, arranged by Dmitry Lazarev*

#### PRAISE THE NAME OF GOD

*Kiev chant, harmonization of Aleksander Kastalsky*

#### SEEING THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

*Kiev chant, harmonization of Pavel Chesnokov*

#### SEEING A STRANGE RESURRECTION

*Music by Georgy Sviridov, arranged by Anton Viskov*

#### HE THAT DWELLETH IN THE HELP OF THE MOST HIGH

*Music by Dmitry Bortnyansky, arranged by Maksim Kotogarov*

#### GOD IS WITH US

*Music by Pavel Chesnokov, arranged by Andrey Poltorukhin*

### Interval

### Part II

#### AH, MY STEPPE WIDE

*Russian folk song, arranged by Aleksander Sveshnikov*

#### ON THE MEADOW, MEADOW GREEN

*Ukrainian folk song, arranged by deacon Aleksander Amerkhanov*

#### I COME OUT TO THE PATH, ALONE

*Music by Elizaveta Shashina, lyrics by Mikhail Lermontov*

#### LOVELY, BROTHERS, LOVELY

*Cossack song, arranged by deacon Aleksander Amerkhanov*

#### IT IS NOT A NIGHT YET

*Cossack song, arranged by Andrey Poltorukhin*

#### KALINKA

*Russian folk song, arranged by Dmitry Lazarev*

#### THE WAVES OF AMUR

*Music by Max Kyuss, lyrics by Seraphim Popov, arranged by Andrey Poltorukhin*

#### BLAZE BLAZE MY STAR

*Music by Petr Bulakhov, lyrics by Vasily Chuevsky, arranged by Fedor Stepanov*

#### KATYUSHA

*Music by Matvey Blanter, lyrics by Mikhail Isakovsky, arranged by Andrey Poltorukhin*

#### WHEN WE WERE AT WAR

*Music by Viktor Stolyarov, lyrics by David Samoilov, arranged by Dmitry Lazarev*

#### ON THE HILLS OF MANCHURIA

*Music by Iliya Shatrov, lyrics by Aleksey Mashistov, arranged by Yuriy Slonov and Andrey Poltorukhin*

#### ENCHANTED DISTANCE

*Music by Aleksandra Pakhmutova, lyrics by Nikolay Dobronravov, arranged by deacon Aleksander Amerkhanov*