

The Third Ekaterinburg International Choral Festival 'Eurasia Cantat', 27th - 30th April 2015

Discover Russia, a welcoming, friendly and cultured country

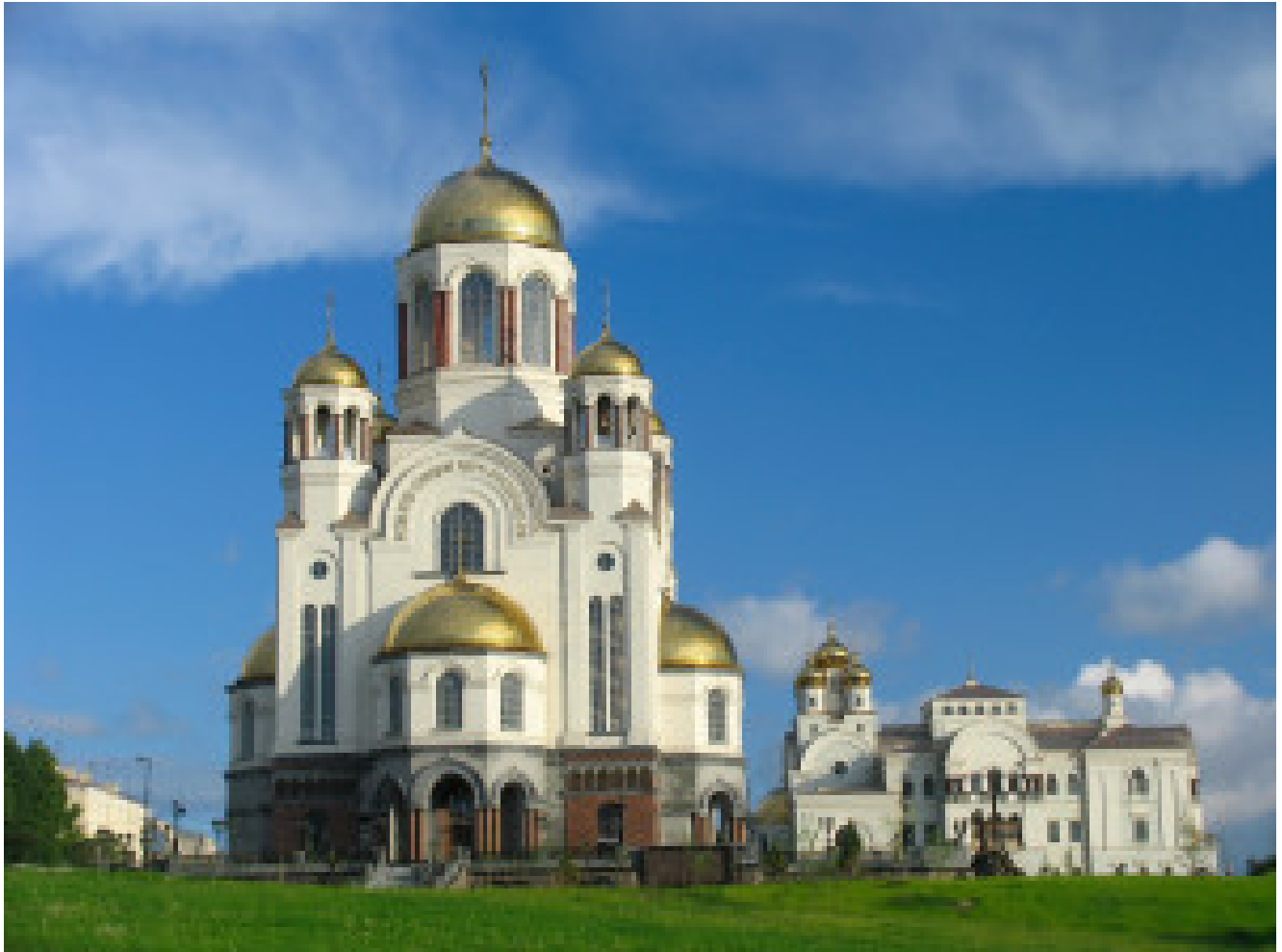
By Yelena Bartnovskaya, choral conductor and teacher

A large-scale meeting of choral ensembles, the Third International Choral Festival 'Eurasia Cantat', took place in Ekaterinburg, Russia, from the 27th to the 30th of April, 2015. More than seventy choral groups came together during the competition to demonstrate their craft, their talent, and the beauty of choral singing. For many performers, receiving an invitation to the Ekaterinburg festival is a significant and meaningful event in a group's creative journey. Concert halls with the best acoustics in Russia, the fantastically high professional level of the international jury, the interest and attentiveness shown by the city's leaders, the comfortable living conditions – all this has contributed to the expansion of the competition's reach and an increase in the number of groups wishing to participate in the Festival.

Hospitality and friendship: these are the principles which guide the organisers of Ekaterinburg's large-scale choral festival. The organisers will book the best hotels for you, ensure that your group is well fed, provide transport, and organise excursions and visits to the city's museums, places of worship, theatres and parks.

Our city is unique. Ekaterinburg lies in the central part of the Eurasian landmass, on the border of Europe and Asia, and

has a population of 1,600,000. It is an administrative, economic, scientific and cultural centre, and many countries have consulates and visa offices here. In 2002, UNESCO named Ekaterinburg as one of twelve ideal world cities.



Ekaterinburg: Cathedral in the names of all saints

Ekaterinburg:

- is the third largest transport hub in Russia, after Moscow and St Petersburg, and is the point where six federal highways, seven main railway lines, and a large international airport, Koltsovo, meet;
- is one of Russia's scientific powerhouses, boasting twenty state institutions of higher education, where more than 200,000 students study;
- is one of the Russian cities which will host the 2018 World Cup;
- is one of Russia's principal cultural centres. Its

architecture includes many buildings from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries which draw the eyes of both the city's inhabitants and its many tourists, and its merchant estates are a significant part of the city's architectural heritage. The eighteenth-century merchants of Ekaterinburg were the owners of industrial enterprises and of goldfields. The gold rush which hit the Urals at the end of the eighteenth century allowed the richest families, the Zotovs, Rastorguevs and Kharitonovs, to build splendid estate complexes which have survived to this day. Shoulder to shoulder with these stand modern buildings noteworthy for their size and beauty. In the city centre stands the tallest building in all the Urals, Siberia and Central Asia, the Vysotskii business centre, which is 198 metres high, with a viewing platform at 186 metres and a helipad on the roof. Citizens and guests of the capital of the Urals can now get a bird's eye view of this beautiful city.



Choir 'Flamingo' from Nizhniy Tagil

Ekaterinburg is also one of the great centres of Russian theatre. There are twenty-four theatres in the city, most of which are known not only in Russia but also abroad. The many prizes won by our theatres at the Golden Mask festival, Russia's principal theatrical competition, bear witness to the originality of their performances. Ekaterinburg's Municipal Puppet Theatre is the venue for the most prestigious festival of puppet shows in the world, 'Petrushka the Great'. The International Clown Festival has also taken place in Ekaterinburg for a number of years, and is unique in the history of circuses worldwide.

As far as cathedrals and religious sites are concerned, the Church On the Blood of All Saints Who Shone Forth in the Russian Land, along with the Patriarch's Court, is the pride and joy of our citizens. The church is one of the largest not only in Ekaterinburg, but in the whole of Russia. The Church of the Holy Trinity and the Church of Alexander Nevsky, situated in the grounds of the Novotikhvinskii nunnery, also stun visitors with their size and beauty. The site most often visited by guests in Ekaterinburg is the Monastery of the Royal Passion-Bearers at Ganina Yama, which has achieved a macabre fame outside of Russia as the place where the remains of the last Russian emperor and his family were brought to rest in 1918.



Choir 'Vdohnovenie' (Inspiration) from Kamensk-Ural' ski

The city takes good care of its more than fifty museums. The wonderfully rich collections of the Kraevedcheskii museum will help you to discover the secrets of the history of the Urals and the Ural mountains. At the Museum of the History of Ekaterinburg, visitors are given the opportunity to discover the history of the city at their own pace.

So there are at least three reasons to visit the city of Ekaterinburg and take part in the Fourth Ekaterinburg International Choral Festival 'Eurasia Cantat' in 2017:

- First of all, it is only here that you can take one step away from Asia and end up in Europe.
- Secondly, this welcoming megalopolis is developing apace and is ready to provide an internationally excellent level of service to visitors. We now have considerable experience in welcoming international guests. If you do not speak Russian, you will have no problems being understood: the city has a number of translators who

speak perfect English, French and German. Ekaterinburg has not yet become indifferent to its visitors, and takes particular care of creative groups who are taking part in large-scale cultural projects.

- Thirdly and finally, the competition's organisers make it possible for representatives of European and Asiatic cultures to come together on one stage, which undoubtedly both improves the professional level of the musicians, conductors and singers and clearly displays the friendship and mutual understanding existing between the peoples of the world. During the Ekaterinburg International Choral Festivals, the whole of Ekaterinburg becomes a great festival stage, with concerts, creative meetings, masterclasses and competition rounds taking place in the best concert halls.



Children Choir 'Raduga' (Rainbow)

In 2015, 1800 singers from sixteen Russian towns took part in the competition. The high point of the festival was the

concert for the last night, when the contest for the Grand Prix took place. The public were thrilled by the performances of the six choral ensembles, the category winners. Everyone held their breath as they waited for the jury's decision. Milan Kolena (Slovakia), director and artistic manager of the Apollo choir, director of the Gregorian Chant School and artistic director of various international choral competitions was the chair of the jury, and was joined by Andrea Angelini (Italy), director of the Carla Amori Chamber Choir, artistic director of the Voci nei Chiostri festival and president of AERCO (Emilia Romagna Region Choral Association), Nina Groshikova (Russia), professor and Distinguished Worker of the Arts in the Russian Federation, and Vladimir Zavadskii (Russia), professor and Distinguished Artist of Russia. Together, they announced their decision: the Grand Prix went to the Women's Choir of Krasnoiarsk (Russia). The unique prize, a vase crafted by an artisan from the Urals together with a financial reward of one thousand euros, was sent off to Krasnoiarsk. The Aurora concert choir from Ekaterinburg, the Students' Choir of Novosibirsk, and the choirs Vivat (from the town of Nizhnii Tagil) and Rainbow (from Ekaterinburg) were also rewarded with special prizes.

You can find all the information you need on the festival's official site, www.eurasia-cantat.ru, or contact Anna Tikhonova, our outreach specialist, at info@eurasia-cantat.ru.

Translated from the Russian by Katie Sykes, UK

Edited by Gillian Forlivesi Heywood, Italy/UK