

‘Vivat, boys!’ International Choral Festival and Competition, Petrozavodsk, Karelia, Russia

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The sixth international choral festival competition, *Vivat, boys!*, named after Sofia Os'kina, was held on November 6-8, 2014. The event took place in Petrozavodsk, the capital of the Republic of Karelia.

Karelia is a land of lakes, forests and many tourists who dream of seeing the famous architectural monuments, on the island of Kizhi. Petrozavodsk is a small and very cosy northern city on the shores of Lake Onega – one of the largest lakes in Europe. *Vivat, boys!* choral festival competition is the only choral competition in North-West Russia, introducing boys and young men to choral singing traditions.

The Children's Choral Music School festival competition was established by the Petrozavodsk City Administration and supported by the Culture Ministry of Karelia.

Participants included soloists, vocal ensembles, choirs and conductors from Estonia and Russia (Chelyabinsk, Moscow, Zelenograd-Moscow, St. Petersburg, Ekaterinburg, Arkhangelsk, Novaya Ladoga, Kirovsk, Veliky Novgorod). Traditionally, the festival is attended by representatives of Petrozavodsk and Karelia (Sortavala, Pitkyaranta, Kondopoga).

Over the years the project has gained a lot of friends,

partners and patrons. Some regular partners in the festival's organization are the Petrozavodsk state Conservatory 'A. Glazunov', Petrozavodsk Music College 'K. Rautio', secondary school No. 14 and the national centre for youth tourism and travel company 'Tapiola'.

The Opening Ceremony was held in the Petrozavodsk State Conservatory Concert Hall. Participants welcomed the representatives of the City Administration and the Culture Ministry of Karelia. There was a performance by the male choir of Petrozavodsk State University (conductor – Alexei Umnov).

The festival included competitive choir performances, a competition for soloists, choir concerts and master-classes by leading choirmasters. The main theme of the contest was Russian sacred music.

The 'Maestro Discanto' vocal competition was open on the first day. The young singers' performances were evaluated by a competent jury from Russia: Svetlana Aristova (the head of the Consonance choir from Chelyabinsk), Marina Alekseeva (teacher of solo singing from Vologda), Vadim Pchelkin (the head of the choral boys' school from St. Petersburg). The *Grand Prix* of the contest was won by Andrey Kulichkov (Chelyabinsk). The jury awarded many prizes among the soloists from Zelenograd (Gleb Fedorov), Kemerovo (Alexander Tretyakov, Ivan Balabaev), Chelyabinsk (Vladimir Lukyanov), Kirovsk (Leonid Lazarev), Petrozavodsk (Nikita Petrov, Nikita Vakhrushev, Emil Poljakov).

Following festival tradition, the evening of the first day ended with a recital by the winner of the last festival – the wonderful Boys' Consonance Choir from Chelyabinsk (Director – Svetlana Aristova, accompanist – Elena Avdeenko). A creative meeting of the competition's participating teams was no less significant for the choir event. The boys were able to see and hear each other, and the leaders were able to share choirmaster experience.



The second day of the festival was the beginning of a competitive marathon for the choirs and vocal ensembles. Their performances were evaluated by an international jury: Tatiana Shvets (St. Petersburg State Conservatory Rimsky-Korsakov), Andrea Angelini (artistic Director of the choral festival *Voci nei Chiostri*, Director of the *Rimini International Choral Competition*, Italy), Valery Kalistratov (Professor of the Moscow state Conservatory P. Tchaikovsky, composer and conductor). The *Grand Prix* was awarded, by unanimous decision of the jury, to the boys Choir Orljata from Zelenograd (Moscow region). First prize went to the Youth and Boys Consonance Choir from Chelyabinsk.

The festival competition jury not only evaluated the performance of the soloists and of the choirs, but also provided master-classes for conductors. During the festival, a conference entitled 'Current issues of music education for boys and youths' was organized by the All-Russian Choral Society. The main theme of the contest was Russian Sacred Music. There were the following lectures and master-classes: "Choral solfeggio" (S. Aristova), "Vocal work in the boys' choir" (V. Pchelkin), "Music of the Renaissance" (A. Angelini), "Techniques of ancient sacred music" (T. Shvets).

The boys had also the opportunity to participate in sports

competitions, to play in the snow, to visit historic monuments in our city and to experience the culture of Karelia.

The final gala concert was held in the Petrozavodsk State Conservatory Concert Hall; it was the sparkling end to the festival. A concert program was performed by the joint choir of the festival and the Russian folk instrument orchestra (conductor Alexei Tchugaev). The program opened with the Karelia's national anthem. Everyone felt victory and pride for their city's culture, the joy of unity in the creative process and their involvement in a large choral brotherhood.

Info: www.laulu-hor.ru