

THE PERFORMING ARTS  
**SERIES**

RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE

presents

**BARYNYA**



TUESDAY, MARCH 20, 2012  
————— 7:30 P.M. —————  
AUDITORIUM IN ROBERTS HALL

## ABOUT BARYNYA:

The Russian music, dance and song ensemble Barynya (Russian: Барыня), established in 1991, is a world renowned group that enjoys exalted stature as the premier Russian folk ensemble. Barynya presents Russian, Cossack, Ukrainian, Russian Jewish, and Russian Gypsy traditional dancing, music, songs, and virtuoso performances on instruments including the balalaika, balalaika-contrabass and garmoshka (Russian folk button accordion). Barynya has performed at some of the most prestigious cultural venues in the United States including Carnegie Hall in New York City, the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, the Smithsonian Institute of America in Washington D.C. , the United Nations in New York, and the Russian Embassy in Washington D.C.

Barynya boasts an impressive client roster of dignitaries, politicians, celebrities and organizations from around the world. The group performed at the black-tie Gala after the Liberty Medal was presented to former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev by President George H.W. Bush in 2008. This prestigious event was attended by over one thousand dignitaries including Tom Brokaw, Dikembe Mutumbo and Van Cliburn. Latest major concert tours include: Australia (2011), Hong Kong (2010), Canada, Mexico (2009), United States (2008).

Barynya also performs annually at the Russian Nobility Ball for the Russian Nobility Association in New York . Members of the ensemble have been invited to perform at many film premiers and celebrity parties, including the official post-Grammy Award parties in New York and for private events hosted by Barbara Walters, Elton John, the Rolling Stones, and Tommy Hilfiger. Most recently, Mikhail Smirnov, the founder and Artistic Director of Barynya, was invited to be one of the eight judges on NBC's hit dance show, "Superstars of Dance". Each judge is an expert in a different nation's traditional style of dance and the NBC producers decided that Mr. Smirnov, as founder of the premier Russian folk ensemble outside of Russia, is the authority on traditional Russian dance.



presents

# BARYNYA

RUSSIAN DANCE AND MUSIC ENSEMBLE

MIKHAIL SMIRNOV, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

ELINA KAROKHINA, MUSICAL DIRECTOR

VALENTINA KVASOVA, CHOREOGRAPHER

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THIS EVENING'S PROGRAM WILL BE ANNOUNCED FROM STAGE  
AND WILL BE PERFORMED WITH ONE INTERMISSION

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STRICTLY PROHIBITED DURING THE PERFORMANCE.

Management:  
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**MIKHAIL SMIRNOV, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND FOUNDER:**

Mikhail Victorovich Smirnov was born in Moscow, Russia in 1966. He has been in the business of Russian folk dance and music for more than 25 years. Mikhail (Russian: Михаил Мирнов) is an artistic director and founder of ensemble Barynya based in New York City, author of many articles about traditional Russian dance, music and instruments in English and Russian. Mikhail received his Master's degree from Moscow State University of Culture and Arts. As a child, he was a member of the famous "Moscow Boys Chorus" - one of the most prestigious all-male choirs in Russia. Before coming to the United States in 1991, Mikhail was a soloist in a several Russian folk dance and music groups including the Moscow State Center for Russian song, "Russkaya Pesnya", under the direction of Nadezhda Babkina. While studying in Moscow, Mikhail followed his passion for Russian folk culture by traveling to many different regions of Russia such as Tver, Smolensk, Belgorod, and Don River to collect Russian folklore at its source. He was surprised to find that folk dances, songs, melodies, lyrics, and tunes change from village to village, even those as close as a couple of miles apart. In these folklore expeditions, Mikhail recorded over 100 hours of Russian folk music and dances, performances on folk instruments. Later he has incorporated much of this original material into repertoire of his ensemble "Barynya" - the biggest (and many believe the best) Russian dance and music ensemble outside of Mother Russia. Mikhail is adept on a variety of Russian folk instruments including balalaika-contrabass, balalaika, and gusli. However, his favorite instrument remains the garmoshka, the small Russian folk button accordion used in Russian folk music and dancing. In January 2009, Mikhail Smirnov and dancers of ensemble Barynya were featured on national TV, NBC's "SUPERSTARS OF DANCE", a breathtaking international dance competition led by executive producers Nigel Lythgoe and Simon Fuller (American Idol, So You Think You Can Dance). This prestigious dance competition was hosted by Michael Flatley ("Lord of the Dance") and Susie Castillo, a former Miss USA. Mikhail Smirnov was one of eight judges. Of course, he was not able to judge Team Russia. The show premiered on NBC network on January 4th and aired through January 26th, 2009.

**ELINA KAROKHINA, MUSICAL DIRECTOR:**

Balalaika virtuoso Elina Karokhina was born in Leningrad (now Saint Petersburg), Russia. She is the daughter of the 2003 Pushkin Prize-winning author L'ev Fyodorovich Karokhin and Galina Savich. Elina began her formal training at the Mussorgsky Music College of St. Petersburg and continued her training at N.A. Rimsky-Korsakov Saint Petersburg State Conservatory, earning a degree as an Orchestra Soloist. She continued her training at the Conservatory, which included a brief residency in Germany. After, she returned to her native St. Petersburg

and completed her education, earning a Doctor of Musical Art degree in the balalaika. Following her graduation, she began working as a musician, both as a teacher and as a performer of the balalaika. Elina Karokhina (Russian: **Елина Карокина**) served in the Russian Army in the Military Ensemble in the Northwest Order of Red Stars. As a balalaika soloist Elina has toured all over the world. When she moved to the United States in 2009 she joined ensemble Barynya and soon became a musical director.

**VALENTINA KVASOVA, CHOREOGRAPHER:**

Valentina Kvasova is a professional dancer specializing in Russian, Cossacks, Ukrainian, and Russian Gypsy (Roma) traditional dances. Valentina Anatolievna Kvasova was born in Russia, in the city of Rostov-na-Donu, Cossack Capital of Russia, on August 25, 1976. After finishing formal education at Voronezh Choreographic School in 1994, she was invited to Rostov Don Cossacks State Academic Song and Dance Ensemble as the actress of ballet. Professional skills and great talent allowed Valentina to join the concert program in a short period of time soon became a soloist of the ensemble. Kvasova Valentina successfully performed with The Don Cossacks in Russia, Japan, Spain, Hungary, the republic of South Africa, the USA and other countries. Valentina equally manages roles of lyrical, playful or comic characters. A dynamic, bright, sociable and talented person, she has gained her recognition among professionals. Valentina Kvasova has joined Russian folk dance and music ensemble Barynya in 2004 as a dancer and singer. In 2005 she became a dance captain and in 2008, a choreographer.

**ALEXANDER MENSHIKOV, SINGER:**

Russian Gypsy singer Alexander Menshikov was born in 1962 in a small town Bugulma, now Republic of Tatarstan (former USSR). He studied singing at The Gnesin's Academy of Russian music in Moscow, the most prestigious school for vocalists in Russia. Alexander Menshikov is considered the best Russian Gypsy singer in the United States of America.

**LEONID BRUK, CONTRABASS-BALALAIKA PLAYER:**

Acclaimed New York based balalaika contrabass player Leonid Bruk was born in Leningrad, Russia. Leonid graduated from music school as a bass guitarist and performed with many different groups. In 1998, he joined Barynya. Since he arrived in the USA, Leonid Bruk was deeply attracted to the bass-balalaika and contrabass balalaika. He has played with various folk groups and soon became known as an expert in Russian folk music. His specialty is playing balalaika-bass and balalaika-contrabass, the largest balalaika in size and also the biggest acoustic string bass musical instrument in the world (bigger than the double bass or contrabass).

# THE PERFORMING ARTS SERIES

RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE

SPRING 2012

VOX LUMIERE:  
METROPOLIS

THE MUIR  
STRING QUARTET

Monday, April 2 • 7:30 p.m.  
*Sapinsley Hall*

PIANIST SIMONE  
DINNERSTEIN

Sunday, April 22 • 2:30 p.m.  
*Sapinsley Hall*

VOX LUMIERE:  
METROPOLIS

Wednesday, April 25 • 7:30 p.m.  
*The Auditorium in Roberts Hall*



TICKETS [WWW.RIC.EDU/PFA](http://WWW.RIC.EDU/PFA) OR (401) 456-8144



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