



## Metropolitan Hilarion attends opening of the 12th Moscow Easter Festival

The 12<sup>th</sup> Moscow Easter Festival opened at the Grand Hall of the Moscow Conservatoire on May 5, the feast of the Resurrection of Christ. Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, took part in the opening ceremony.

He addressed Vladimir Medinsky, Russian Minister of Culture, artistic director of the Festival, maestro Valery Gergiev, and all organizers, participants and guests with Easter greeting: Christ is risen! All those present answered: He is risen indeed!

Metropolitan Hilarion continued: "On this radiant and joyful day of Easter, I cordially greet all of you on behalf of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia. It is with his blessing that the 12<sup>th</sup> Easter Festival is opening within these historical walls. It is remarkable that the Festival takes place during Easter days. This feast reminds us of the victory of life over death, of good over evil, the victory of Christ over the antichrist, renewing spring in our souls and all good and bright sentiments.

"The music that will be performed at the Festival concerts, be it symphonic or choral music, or bell-ringing, elevates human spirit and brings people closer to God. The language of music is universal; people understand and perceive it irrespective of their convictions or religious belief. Music touches the soul of every human being."

Metropolitan Hilarion also noted that the renowned conductor and artistic director of the Festival, Valery Gergiev, celebrated his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday several days ago. "Dear and esteemed Valery Abisailovich, On behalf of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill I congratulate you once again on this remarkable jubilee and wish you great success in your creative work," His Eminence said and added that he also congratulates maestro and prays to the Lord to give him strength for his work. He presented Mr. Gergiev with a "Joy to All the Afflicted" icon of the Mother of God.

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The 12<sup>th</sup> Moscow Easter Festival will be held from 5 to 16 of May, 2013. It is dedicated to the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Kursk Battle. The programme includes almost one hundred concerts that will be performed in thirty Russian cities.

The previous eleven festivals were held in over fifty Russian cities; several thousand performers from Europe, Americas and Asia took part in them.

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