



## **Primate of Georgian Orthodox Church takes part in closing of Christmas Festival of Religious Music**

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On 24 January 2013, the final concert of the Third Christmas Festival of Religious Music took place at the Moscow International House of Music. Attending the concert was His Holiness and Beatitude Catholicos-Patriarch Iliya II of All Georgia.

Among those present was Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations. Metropolitan Hilarion and Mr. Vladimir Spivakov, president of the Moscow International House of Music, act as artistic directors of this musical forum. Attending the final concert of the Festival were also Archbishop Mark of Yegorievsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Administration for Institutions Abroad; Metropolitan Gerasim of Zugdidi and Tsaishi, chairman of the Georgian Patriarchate's Foreign Department; and numerous Muscovites and visitors to the Russian capital.

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk conveyed to all those present greetings from His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia.

Then Metropolitan Hilarion greeted His Holiness and Beatitude Iliya II, saying in particular: "His Holiness has been the head of the Georgian Orthodox Church for thirty five years. He became a Patriarch in the difficult Soviet period when religion was subjected to oppression and persecution. However, the spiritual revival began in Georgia already at that time, thanks to Catholicos-Patriarch Iliya's unceasing work." Metropolitan Hilarion witnessed that revival while visiting Georgia in 80s. He was Patriarch Iliya's subdeacon and saw people gathering around their spiritual leader. "In the sad recent times, which have shown dramatic deterioration in relations between Russia and Georgia, the Georgian and Russian Orthodox Churches have been the main connecting link between our peoples and maintained our spiritual ties. His Holiness and Beatitude Catholicos-Patriarch Iliya has played a great part in it," Metropolitan Hilarion said.

“We know His Holiness as an outstanding spiritual leader. Today we will also come to know him as an outstanding composer,” Metropolitan Hilarion continued.

“One may ask a question ‘Why does a Patriarch write music? Has he nothing to do? Does he have so much spare time?’ I can assure you that the Patriarch does not have any spare time at all: from morning till night, he works for the benefit of his Church, meeting with people, receiving guests, praying and celebrating divine services. But still, when your soul is singing you cannot stop it. And when a spiritual leader wants to address people using not only words but music too, it is a special gift and today we will hear how His Holiness and Beatitude Iliya makes use of this gift,” Metropolitan Hilarion said.

The Patriarchal Choir of the Holy Trinity Cathedral in Tbilisi opened the concert by performing traditional Georgian hymns.

Then the Academic Grand Choir “Masters of Choral Singing” and the National Symphony Orchestra conducted by Vladimir Spivakov performed compositions by His Holiness and Beatitude Catholicos-Patriarch Iliya II: ‘Kyrie Eleison’, ‘Sanctus’ and ‘Ave Maria’. Those compositions were performed in Moscow for the first time.

In the second part of the concert, the Academic Grand Choir and the National Symphony Orchestra which that day celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary performed ‘Requiem’ by Alemdar Karamanov.

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