



Maestro Valery Gergiev wins Patriarchal award

[gallery]

Valery Gerigiev, a Russian conductor and general and artistic director of the Mariinsky Theatre, has been awarded the Medal of St. Sergius of Radonezh in recognition of his work for the benefit of the Holy Church. Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, presented the award to the outstanding conductor and cultural worker at the opening of the choral part of the 9th Easter Festival on 5 April 2010 at the Church of Christ the Saviour. Maestro Valery Gergiev is the artistic director of the festival.

Greeting the audience, Russian Minister of Culture A. Avdeyev said that this year the 9th Easter Festival is devoted to the 65th anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War. The festival will cover almost 100 cities in Russia. Russian and visiting teams will perform symphonic, liturgical and choral music. 'In these days we seek to think about the most important things – our values, our history and our future. Our today's concert just as the spiritual part of the festival is devoted to precisely these themes', the minister said. He expressed special gratitude to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia for his support of the festival and greeted Byelorussian minister of Culture P. Latushko, composer Rodion Shchedrin and ballerina Maya Plisetskaya, who were present in the audience.

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk greeted the audience on behalf of Patriarch Kirill and said in particular, 'The Easter Festival has become a very important event in the cultural life of not only Moscow, not only Russia but also near-abroad countries. This festival is unique in that it unites the best musical teams while giving to people a very clear idea of Orthodox spirituality'. It is very important, he said, that the Church encourages the recital of not only liturgical but also symphonic music to introduce it to the public at large, including young people. The propaganda of classical music is a common task for all those who are concerned for the future of our people. It is no secret that many young people today prefer pop music, often very superficial and sometimes even harmful and destructive for the state of mind and health.

Speaking about the work carried out by Valery Gergiev, Metropolitan Hilarion said, 'The noble cause pursued by Valery Gergiev is also aimed to inculcate in our youth the taste and love of classical music because through it people get in touch with the beautiful. This music helps to form a human personality, speaking about good and uplifting and purifying the soul.'

He thanked Valery Gergiev 'for all you do for our culture, for your everyday feat of concertizing at home and abroad, conducting sometimes two concerts a day, which seems to be beyond human power. But

when one listens to you and watches you at the conductor's stand it seems there is no task impossible for you'.

Maestro Valery Gergiev in his response expressed gratitude for the award and stressed that the Easter Festival was a festival 'of Moscow and All Russia'. He thanked Patriarch Kirill for his support of the festival and made a special mention of the contribution made by the Mariinsky Theatre team to this large-scale musical and educational project, saying, 'I hope that this festival will outlive us all and will never lose its educational meaning'.

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