HUMANITIES WEST PRESENTS

Late Czarist Russian Artistic Brilliance
Friday & Saturday, November 2 & 3, 2018
Marines’ Memorial Theatre, 609 Sutter Street, San Francisco, CA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: (SAN FRANCISCO, 21 August, 2018) Humanities West opens its 2018-2019 Season with Late Czarist Russian Artistic Brilliance, a two-day program of lectures, discussions, and musical performances exploring the enduring contributions of Russian art, music, and literature created during the twilight years of Czarist Russia. The program takes place on Friday, November 2, from 7:30pm to 9:30pm, and Saturday, November 3, from 10am to 4pm, at Marines’ Memorial Theatre, located at 609 Sutter Street in downtown San Francisco.

Tickets for Late Czarist Russian Artistic Brilliance, are priced as follows: Single tickets for individual Friday programs are $60 orchestra and $45 balcony and individual Saturday programs are $80 orchestra and $55 balcony, single tickets for both days of each program are $125 orchestra and $90 balcony. Order direct from City Box Office 415-392-4400 or www.cityboxoffice.com. Season tickets may still be available and offer a significant savings. Visit www.humanitieswest.org for details and complete program descriptions for the 2018-2019 Season. Individual balcony tickets for teachers and students are available for $25/day for any program. Free tickets are available in limited quantities for students age 25 or younger (inquire at info@humanitieswest.org).

Humanities West’s two-day lecture/performance programs are designed to transport audiences through time and across the globe, bringing illuminating lectures and dynamic performances to the Bay Area. The 2018-2019 season begins with a visit to late Czarist Russia to explore the dazzling brilliance of its art, music, and literature. The phrase “European with Asian characteristics” expresses an continuing fascination with the prolific contributions to world culture created during the late 1800’s by Russian
artists, including the music of Tchaikovsky, Scriabin, Rachmaninoff, Stravinsky, and Prokofiev; the artwork of Kramskoy, Repin, and Levitan; and the writings of Pushkin, Gogol, Turgenev, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and Chekhov. This program will examine the cultural and historical influences that helped Russians, and then the rest of the West, to recognize and to reward the gifts of these Russian artists.

The program opens Friday evening with **A Russian Success Story**, a unique lecture and performance by **Robert Greenberg**, confirming the emergence of a concert music tradition in 19th-century Russia as one of the great success stories in the history of European art. Russia began the 19th century with virtually no native tradition of concert, or “literate music.” Greenberg will demonstrate how, by the end of the century, Russia was not only able to export music and musicians across the globe, but also boasted two of the world’s greatest schools of music and produced a number of young Russian composers who would change the nature and syntax of European literate music.

On Saturday, **Luba Golburt (UC Berkeley)** presents **Pushkin or Gogol: Two Blueprints for 19th-Century Russian Literature**, a talk exploring the contributions and reception of these two writers, offering differing ways to organize and understand the myths of Russian literature. Roughly contemporary and well acquainted with each other, Pushkin and Gogol stand for alternative origin myths for Russian literature: one taking root in the golden age; the other, in the age of iron.

**Gary Hamburg (Claremont-McKenna College)** follows with a presentation **Dostoevsky and the Golden Age of Russian Literature**, unraveling the major literary developments of Russia during the mid to late 1800’s. These include the flourishing of Russian poetry and publication of masterly novels by Pushkin, Gogol, Turgenev, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. Recurring themes of human torment, unjust modern societies, and the need to find dignity and meaning in life when basic moral precepts have fallen under debate, will be discussed.

The program continues with a special musical performance **Eugene Onegin**, introduced by Clifford ‘Kip’ Cranna (**SF Opera**). Pushkin’s verse novel **Eugene Onegin** is the tale of an arrogant young nobleman who spurns the naïve young Tatiana’s profession of love, only to realize too late the tragedy of his loss. Excerpts from Tchaikovsky’s brilliant operatic setting of the story will be performed by soprano **Rhoslyn Jones** and baritone **Eugene Brancoveanu**, accompanied by pianist **Kevin Korth**.
The weekend culminates with *Painting the Russian Word*, a talk by Molly Brunson (Yale) on the relationships between writers and painters demonstrating the vibrant interconnection of Russian artists during late 19th century. Told through some of Russia’s most famous paintings, this is a story of the rise of a national culture through collaborations and rivalries, creativity and competition—ultimately forming a Russian artistic tradition that had emerged from virtually nothing to become a cornerstone of global culture.

A panel discussion with the presenters will follow, addressing questions from the audience.

*Ancillary programs providing opportunities to learn more about the featured topic and related issues complement this two-day event. For a complete program schedule and additional information about the presenters please visit [www.humanitieswest.org](http://www.humanitieswest.org)

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**About Humanities West**
Serving the Bay Area since 1983, Humanities West Explores History and Celebrates the Arts through time and across the globe, bringing illuminating lectures and dynamic performances that focus on the people, places, and events that have shaped, and still inform, modern cultures.

Each season Humanities West presents a number of programs in which leading scholars and artists present lectures, performances, readings and discussions to audiences in San Francisco’s Marines’ Memorial Theatre. These one- or two-day events represent an opportunity unique not only to the Bay Area, but also to the entire United States. In cooperation with other institutions, such as the Mechanic’s Institute Library and the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco, additional public lectures and panels are presented to further expand upon program topics

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**CALENDAR LISTING: EVENTS/LECTURES/ARTS & CULTURE**
**WHAT: Late Czarist Russian Artistic Brilliance**
Humanities West presents *Late Czarist Russian Artistic Brilliance*, a two-day program of lectures, discussions, and musical performances exploring the enduring contributions of Russian art, music, and literature created during the twilight years of Czarist Russia. Presenters include Robert Greenberg, Luba Golburt, Gary Hamburg, Kip Cranna, and Molly Brunson, with a special music performance by Rhoslyn Jones (soprano) and Eugene Brancoveanu (baritone) accompanied by Kevin Korth (piano).

**WHEN:** 7:30pm to 9:30pm, Friday, November 2, 2018
10am to 4pm, Saturday, November 3, 2018

**WHERE:** Marines’ Memorial Theatre
609 Sutter Street, San Francisco

**TICKETS:** $25 - $80
Tickets are available through City Box Office at 415-392-4400 or online at [www.cityboxoffice.com](http://www.cityboxoffice.com)
Group tickets: info@humanitieswest.org

**PUBLIC INFO:** 415/391-9700 or [www.humanitieswest.org](http://www.humanitieswest.org)

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**Related Events for Late Czarist Russian Artistic Brilliance**

**HUMANITIES WEST BOOK DISCUSSION** led by Lynn Harris

*Novels, Tales, Journeys: The Complete Prose of Alexander Pushkin*

The father of Russian literature, Pushkin is beloved not only for his poetry but also for his brilliant stories, which range from dramatic tales of love, obsession, and betrayal to dark fables and sparkling comic masterpieces, from satirical epistolary tales and romantic adventures in the manner of Sir Walter Scott to imaginative historical fiction and the haunting dreamworld of “The Queen of Spades.” The five short stories of *The Late Tales of Ivan Petrovich Belkin* are lightly humorous and yet reveal astonishing human depths, and his short novel, *The Captain’s Daughter*, has been called the most perfect book in Russian literature.

**When:** 6:30pm, Wednesday, October 17, 2018  
**Where:** Commonwealth Club of California  
110 The Embarcadero, SF, CA  
**Cost:** $5  
**TIX:** [www.commonwealthclub.org](http://www.commonwealthclub.org) or 415-597-6700

**FIRESIDE CHAT with George Hammond**

*Late Czarist Russian Artistic Brilliance – Preview*

Join Humanities West board member George Hammond for a preview of *Late Czarist Russian Artistic Brilliance*, a two-day program of lectures, discussions, and musical performances exploring the enduring contributions of Russian art, music, and literature created during the twilight years of Czarist Russia.

**When:** 6:30pm, Tuesday, October 30, 2018  
**Where:** Orinda Library,  
26 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA  
**Cost:** Free

**HUMANITIES WEST SALON PERFORMANCE:**

*Tchaikovsky & Borodin: Russian Musical Brilliance in Performance*

Steven Machtinger, attorney and violist, performs with The San Joaquin Quartet to celebrate Russian musical brilliance. Alexander Borodin was a famous Russian chemist who today is better known as one of the greatest Romantic composers of the 19th century. The San Joaquin Quartet will perform his String Quartet No. 2 in D, which includes the famous Nocturne. The program concludes with Andante Cantabile from Tchaikovsky’s String Quartet No. 1.

**When:** 6:00pm, Thursday, November 1, 2018  
**Where:** Commonwealth Club of California  
110 The Embarcadero, SF, CA  
**Cost:** $20  
**TIX:** [www.commonwealthclub.org](http://www.commonwealthclub.org) or 415-597-6700

**HUMANITIES WEST BOOK DISCUSSION** led by Lynn Harris

*The First Epoch: The Eighteenth Century and the Russian Cultural Imagination*  
By Luba Golburt

Modern Russian literature has two “first” epochs: secular literature’s rapid rise in the eighteenth century and Alexander Pushkin’s Golden Age in the early nineteenth. In the shadow of the latter, Russia’s eighteenth-century culture was relegated to an obscurity hardly befitting its actually radical legacy. And yet the eighteenth century maintains an
undeniable hold on the Russian historical imagination to this day. Luba Golburt’s book is the first to document this paradox. In formulating its self-image, the culture of the Pushkin era and after wrestled far more with the meaning of the eighteenth century, Golburt argues, than is commonly appreciated.

Winner, Marc Raeff Book Prize, Eighteenth-Century Russian Studies Association

Winner, Heldt Prize for the Best Book by a Woman in Slavic/Eastern European/Eurasian Studies, Association for Women in Slavic Studies

**When:** 6:30pm, Wednesday, November 21, 2018  
**Where:** Commonwealth Club of California  
110 The Embarcadero, SF, CA  
**Cost:** $5  
**TIX:** [www.commonwealthclub.org](http://www.commonwealthclub.org) or 415-597-6700