

## **ACCORDION VIRTUOSI OF RUSSIA**

The Accordion Virtuosi of Russia was founded in 1943 during the Leningrad siege by Professor Pavel Smirnov. Within only six months, the ensemble was invited to record on the state radio. Since its inception, the Accordion Virtuosi of Russia has been led by three generations of the Smirnov family: first by its founder Pavel Smirnov, and now by his sons Yuri and Vladimir, as well as his grandson Yaroslav.

Throughout its history, Accordion Virtuosi of Russia has performed at some of the most prestigious venues in the world including the Leipzig Gewandhaus, Verona's Arena, Olympia Hall in Paris, and the Great Philharmonic Hall in St. Petersburg. They have toured extensively in Germany, Italy, France, Holland, Switzerland, Belgium, Austria, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Spain, Japan, Guinea, Angola, Sierra Leone, Congo, China, Canada and elsewhere. They are also winners of numerous competitions in Russia such as "Musical Carousel" and "Peter-Pavel Assemblies". Most recently, the Accordion Virtuosi of Russia has been included in the prestigious "Golden Book of St. Petersburg" for its artistic achievements, and was also named the "best accordion orchestra of Europe of 2013" by the orchestral society "EU Musika" in Frankfurt, Germany.

This outstanding ensemble was invited to be a part of the cultural program for the Olympic Games in Munich in 1972, Montreal in 1976, and Moscow in 1980. The ensemble's repertoire ranges from folk music to arrangements of rock songs, and continues to astound audiences around the world.

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### **YURI SMIRNOV, Artistic Director and Conductor VLADIMIR SMIRNOV, Conductor**

Yuri Smirnov is the Accordion Virtuosi of Russia's Artistic Director and has worked with the orchestra since 1967. He is also a professor at the State University of the Arts and head of the "Union of the Arts Workers" in St. Petersburg, Russia. Most recently he has received the title of "People's Artist of the Russian Federation" from the Russian government. This prestigious honor is given to a very small number of artists each year for their outstanding work in the field of the Arts.

Vladimir Smirnov has been the Principal Conductor of the orchestra from 1978. He has taught several generations of the orchestra's players and received the prestigious title of the "Honored Artist of the Russian Federation" for dedication in his work with the orchestra.