



sydney balalaika orchestra

# NOVOSTI



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## CONCERT AT THE RUSSIAN CLUB

28th of July saw our annual concert at the Russian Club in Strathfield. We embarked on this concert with some trepidation since our much-loved virtuoso cymbalist Lucy Voronov was unable to play on the day, but we needn't have been concerned. Our leading soloists, accordionist Richard She stepped up with his rendition of "Fantasy in Mi mineur", and lead domra player Tanya Jephtha performed "Old Carousel" with great virtuosity. More importantly, the whole orchestra played particularly well.

"We were tight, well balanced and I felt so proud of the orchestra," said musical director Victor Serghie, which was just as well. Among our honoured VIPs were the Ambassador of the Russian Federation and a guest from Consulate General.



*A. Chirva, A.V. Pavlovski, Victor and N.N. Vinogradov.*



*Elena and her elder brother George Sheslow*

Our Russian Club concerts are usually well attended, but not to the standing room only as was on this occasion. "The audience was remarkable" said Victor Serghie, "we normally come prepared with two encores but we could have done with four, such was the audience appreciation." The star of our show was our 2nd flautist Elena Sheslow who is only 12 - the youngest musician of SBO. She has been playing with us for a year, but this was her first public

performance. She also performed a solo on the zhaleika during our rendition of "In Full Swing". Her older brother George, plays the bayan.

"We look forward to pushing our average age down further", said 70-something year old President of the SBO Bruce Barker. "She has been brilliant".

## UPCOMING CONCERTS

**Sunday 13 Oct 2019 | SINGLETON, NSW | 2.00pm Start**  
Sisters of Mercy Convent, 30 Queen St.

**Saturday 19 Oct 2019 | BURRAWANG, NSW | 2.30pm Start**  
School of Arts, Hoddle St.

**Friday 14 Feb 2020 | SUTHERLAND, NSW | 7.30pm Start**  
**NEW VENUE** Sutherland Uniting Church, Cnr Flora and Eton St.

**Sunday 8 Nov 2020 | GERRINGONG, NSW | 2.00pm Start**  
Gerringong Town Hall, 106 Fern St.

### CAN YOU HELP?

The SBO is always seeking to perform at new venues. Maybe you know a venue where we can introduce our beautiful Russian folk music to a new audience. We also need additional musicians, so if you come up with any ideas please contact our Musical Director, **Victor Serghie on 0409 058 895** or our Secretary, **Richard She on 0402 179 098.**

For more details please refer to our website  
[www.balalaika.com.au](http://www.balalaika.com.au)

## DUET AT THE RUSSIAN CLUB



*Sophia Markovtzev & Dmitry Kuevda*

We are blessed with two great singers. You probably know Sophia Markovtzev with her rich contralto voice. But some of you may not know Dmitry Kuevda who has recently brought his mellow baritone voice to the orchestra.

Our singers male and female, usually present their songs on their own, but seldom together. This happened twice at the Russian Club concert when they sang the beautiful romantic song "Tbilisi" in perfect harmony followed by "Those Were the Days" as an encore.

"Getting two great voices to sing together isn't as easy as it may seem" said Victor Serghie. "Often their voices are pitched for different keys but on this occasion they came together beautifully".

## TANYA JEPHTHA

There are famously, only nine native Russian speakers in the SBO and Tanya Jephtha is one of them. She is the leader of the SBO's first prima-domra section and a virtuoso player of this instrument.

It was in 1997, that the young Tanya first arrived in Australia from Russia with her husband, and it wasn't long before her musical talents were noted within the Russian community.

Tanya had been well trained studying at the Voronezh State Academy of Arts and Music graduating with a diploma in performing and conducting folk orchestras. She also played prima domra in the Academy Orchestra.

She performed in many concerts throughout Russia, on one occasion playing in a folk festival in the Kremlin, Moscow. The SBO is indeed fortunate to have her playing with us here in Australia.



*Tanya Jephtha*

## SBO DYNASTIES



The SBO has a number of dynasties playing in the orchestra. We have already mentioned the brother and sister duo: Elena and George Sheslow.

But there is another brother-sister alliance: Martha Babineau and Michael Den Boer. "It all started with our parents" said Martha. "Father played piano while Mum also played piano and organ". Martha went on to

study music at the Sydney Conservatorium; piano and classical violin. Later she went into television as a film editor and lived in the US for a few years.

On her return to Australia, Martha got back into music. "I played mandolin with Sydney Mandolin Orchestra and the Mandeltorte Trio. In 1994 when I came to a SBO rehearsal, I fell in love with Russian music and joined".

It was a similar story with her brother Michael, who went on to run his own television production company. "As a kid I really enjoyed playing guitar informally at parties" he said. "I joined the orchestra after touring with them, as a film producer, on a concert tour of NSW country areas. I didn't expect to, but I just fell in love with the music".

Michael plays in the SBO's "International Guitar Section" as he terms it. And that's no exaggeration. "We've played in Russia, China and New Zealand" he said – now that's international!"

Both Martha and Michael are of Armenian origin, but are proudly Australian. "The love of Russian music keeps us in the orchestra" said Martha.



Perhaps the biggest dynasty in the SBO are the three members of Serbian extraction, the Stojkov family. Petar, the father, is the leading alto-domra player with SBO. He also enjoys playing his national instrument tambura, with other groups. His son Lazar plays the bass-domra, when he is not playing ice hockey, while his daughter Sonja, a keen soccer player, is SBO's percussionist. If you have ever noticed strange noises coming from the back - bird whistle, grating and swishing sounds, as well as a glockenspiel – that's Sonja!