

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

What: A Memorial Concert in Tribute to Pianist Alexander Slobodyanik
When: Saturday, January 31, 2009 at 8:00 PM
Where: Merkin Concert Hall at Kaufman Center
Goodman House 129 West 67th Street
Admission Free
For Reserved Seating, call the Box Office at 212-501-3330
www.merkinconcerthall.org

Media Contact: Amanda von Goetz
amanda.vongoetz@gmail.com
646-496-7662

New York, NY – On Saturday, January 31st, Robert Sherman will host a special performance in honor of the late, great artist of the Golden Age of the Russian School and one of the world's finest Romantic piano virtuosos, Alexander Slobodyanik, who died in August of 2008 at the age of 66. Renowned pianist and conductor Vladimir Feltsman has engaged a cast of top performing pianists for this special tribute at Merkin Concert Hall.

Feltsman will be joined by Slobodyanik's longtime friends and colleagues, Eteri Anjaparidze, Sergei Babayan, Alexander Korsantia, Susan Starr and Alexander Toradze in a program of solo works by Bach, Haydn, Schubert, Schumann and Chopin. Slobodyanik's son, Alex, also a world-renowned performer, will be making a special appearance in this event dedicated to the memory of his father.

An eminent master pianist, the late Alexander Slobodyanik was a protégé of Sviatoslav Richter, a student of legendary Professors Henrich Neuhaus and Vera Gornostayeva, and a discovery of the great impresario Sol Hurok. The Ukrainian-born pianist earned stardom in the former Soviet Union with his fiery virtuosity and emotional interpretations of Romantic composers, and was in constant demand as a concert pianist and teacher since moving to the United States in 1989. His career spanned five decades and brought him unparalleled accolades in the world of classical music. www.slobodyanik.com

NY Times Obituary: www.nytimes.com/2008/08/13/arts/music/13slobodyanik.html?partner=permalink&expod=permalink

UK Telegraph Obituary: www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/2560239/Alexander-Slobodyanik.html

BIOGRAPHY

Alexander Slobodyanik was born in Kiev, Ukraine, and began piano studies with Lidia Golembo in Lviv. At age 15, he was selected to join the studio of legendary Professor Henrich Neuhaus at the Moscow Central Special Music School, where he later completed his Masters and Doctorate at the Moscow Conservatory under Vera Gornostayeva. During that time, he became a laureate of major international competitions such as the Chopin Competition in Warsaw and the Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow. By the age of 18, Slobodyanik had toured extensively throughout his native Soviet Union and Europe. By recommendation of Sviatoslav Richter, Slobodyanik was discovered by impresario Sol Hurok, and so began his conquering of the West.

Slobodyanik burst onto the American scene in 1968, with a Carnegie Hall debut recital that left the critics hailing him as “a leader of his generation.” He was recognized by premier artists and legends such as Arthur Rubinstein, Vladimir Horowitz and Rosina Lhevinne as “the new star.”

Since that time, Slobodyanik toured extensively throughout Europe, North & South America, South Africa, Australia and the Far East. He graced the stages of Carnegie Hall, Avery Fisher Hall, Kennedy Center, the Barbican in London, La Scala in Milan, Théâtre de Champs Elysées in Paris and the Hollywood Bowl. He appeared as soloist with the Chicago, London, Pittsburgh, National, Montreal and San Francisco Symphonies; with the New York, Los Angeles, Royal and St. Petersburg Philharmonics; the Philadelphia, Cleveland and Kirov Orchestras; the Moscow Soloists, Orchestre National de France, and the Gewandhaus Orchestra of Leipzig, under the baton of Leonard Bernstein, Kurt Masur, Sir John Barbirolli, Christoph von Dohnanyi, Valery Gergiev, Mariss Jansons, Neeme Järvi, Dmitri Kitaenko, Kiril Kondrashin, Mstislav Rostropovich, Genady Rozhdestvensky, Thomas Sanderling, Maxim Schostakovich, Yuri Temirkanov and Yuri Bashmet. Slobodyanik recorded for the Angel, Melodiya, Eurodisc and MCA labels. His discography includes a legendary LIVE-concert recording of all twenty-four Chopin Etudes.

As Founder & Artistic Director of the Morris International Festival of the Arts, to which the re-opening of Morristown’s Community Theatre may be attributed, Slobodyanik performed at its highly-publicized Gala Opening Concert in September 1994 as soloist with St. Petersburg’s Kirov Orchestra, led by Valery Gergiev. Slobodyanik later engaged the world’s top artists to participate in the Festival’s unique and innovative programs, including Maxim Vengerov, Peter Serkin, Gidon Kremer, Yuri Bashmet, Viktor Tretyakov, Joseph Kalichstein, Luba Kazarnovskaya and Vladimir Feltsman; The Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, the Moscow Soloists, the US Military Academy Concert Band and the St. Petersburg Ice Ballet. Special guests included Nobel Prize laureate poet Joseph Brodsky and Evgeni Yevtushenko. Art exhibitions were also made available for viewing for the Morristown community, showcasing ground-breaking original works by Ernst Neizvestny and Mikhail Chemiakin.

During Carnegie Hall’s Centennial Celebration in 1991, Slobodyanik and violinist Gidon Kremer gave the World Premiere of Alfred Schnittke’s Concerto Grosso No. 5 with the Cleveland Orchestra. More recently, other world premieres have included Schnittke’s “Aphorisms,” also at Carnegie Hall, and Alexander Tchaikovsky’s Two-Piano Concerto with pianist Yefim Bronfman and the Pittsburgh Symphony (2003). Both works were dedicated to Alexander Slobodyanik.