

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Master Ukrainian Pianist Alexander Slobodyanik Dies at Age 66
September 5, 1941 – August 10, 2008

Morristown, NJ – Sunday, August 10, 2008 the world lost an eminent master pianist. Alexander Slobodyanik was a protégé of Sviatoslav Richter, a student of Professors Henrich Neuhaus and Vera Gornostayeva, and a discovery of the great impresario Sol Hurok. His career spanned five decades and brought him unparalleled accolades in the world of classical music.

Slobodyanik fell ill last Thursday with meningitis and was pronounced deceased on Sunday, August 10. He was 66 years old.

He is survived by his wife, Laryssa, his son, Alex, his students, and all those whose lives he touched with the sublimity of his talent, and the sincerity in his heart.

Funeral services will be held on Thursday, August 14, 2008, at St. John's Ukrainian Church, 719 Sanford Avenue, Newark, NJ 07106. 973-371-1356. Wake from 4pm to 6pm, services will begin at 6pm. For more information and a tribute, visit www.slobodyanik.com

Press inquiries contact Amanda von Goetz
646-496-7662 – amanda.vongoetz@gmail.com

Flowers may be sent to St. John's Ukrainian Church, 719 Sanford Avenue, Newark NJ 07106. In place of flowers, donations will be appreciated in establishing the Alexander Slobodyanik Young Artist Scholarship Fund, which will eventually seek to provide financial support to emerging artists. Checks may be made payable to Nova Artists Inc., 138 West Hanover Avenue, Morristown NJ 07960. All donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowable by law.

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, Theatre de Champs Elysees 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 Jarvi, 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.