

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

At Liberty Theatre, **classical musicians offer taste of Astoria Music Festival**



DAMIAN MULINIX PHOTO

Pianist Ilya Kazantsev plays with cellist Sergey Antonov on the Liberty Theatre stage in 2014.

By **WILLIAM HAM**
FOR COAST WEEKEND

One of Russia's greatest cultural exports — classical music — comes to the Liberty Theatre on Saturday, Jan. 13, when “Russian Gold III: A Russian ‘Old New Year’s Eve’” is presented by two more notable exports: cellist Sergey Antonov and pianist Ilya Kazantsev.

Timed to coincide with the informal celebration of the “Old” Russian New Year, which falls on Jan. 14 on the Julian calendar, the event serves two purposes: first, to showcase the works of some of the greatest Russian composers, and second, to offer an early taste of the 16th

annual Astoria Music Festival.

The official start of the Festival is still several months away, but “we like to keep our irons in the fire,” as co-founder, conductor and artistic director Keith Clark put it. The recital is the first of several winter events to be presented under the AMF umbrella in the run-up to the Festival proper.

“It’ll be an opportunity to celebrate the New Year a second time,” Clark said.

The all-Russian program features two longer pieces — Sergei Rachmaninoff’s Sonata in G minor for Piano and Cello, and Nikolai Myaskovsky’s Cello Sonata No. 2 in A minor — as well as several shorter works by Rachmaninoff and Tchaikovsky.

“It’s a very, very Russian program,” Antonov said. “When you think of Russian music, Rachmaninoff always pops up; it’s international, like we are. The ‘Sonata’ is an enormous joy to perform and to hear. And Myaskovsky’s work is almost folkloric, filled with the spirit of Russia. It’s Russian soul music.”

‘To Astorians with Love’

“Russian Gold III” marks the third joint appearance of Antonov and Kazantsev in Astoria.

“Sergey and Ilya are regular and longtime members of our creative team,” Clark said. “They’ve developed a very strong following on the coast. The ‘Gold’ part is that they have won

IF YOU GO

What: “Russian Gold III: A Russian ‘Old New Year’s Eve’”

When: 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 13

Where: Liberty Theatre (1203 Commercial St.)

Tickets: Level-A seating and post-concert reception \$40. General admission \$20. Students \$5. Tickets available at the Liberty Theatre.

In person: Liberty Box Office will open 2 p.m., stay open until 8 p.m.; “will call” tickets available for pickup day of the concert. Online: libertyastoria.org. By phone: 503-325-5922, extension 55.

A reception with the artists for \$40 ticket holders follows the concert at Hotel Elliott wine bar (357 12th St.).