

Izumrud to showcase soundscape of modern Russian folk

Russian modern folk ensemble Izumrud will perform its special blend of folk and contemporary music in Hong Kong in November as part of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department's Music Delight Series.

Izumrud ("emerald" in Russian) was founded in the city of Yekaterinburg, which is located in the Ural Mountains area. The name reflects the musical group's versatility and the sparkle of the precious stone.

Considered one of Russia's major musical innovators, the ensemble performed at the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi. Izumrud is committed to redefining the Russian folk soundscape through its fresh reinterpretation of a kaleidoscope of styles, genres, and melodies in their concerts, ranging from J S Bach, Handel and Schubert to Stravinsky and Saint-Saens, and from Elvis Presley and the Beatles to original compositions. Through their creative artistry and inspired performances, members of the ensemble aspire to transcend the boundaries between folk, classical and rock as well as between Russia and the world.

Commenting on the emergence of modern Russian folk music, Wong Chuen-Fung, a Professor of World Music at Macalester College in the United States, said, "Yet the Russian folk soundscape that has enjoyed the greatest surge of popularity among its international audience in the post-Soviet era is one that bears an unmistakably inventive and populist outlook. The foremost national symbol is the balalaika, a triangular, three-stringed plucked lute, strummed with rapid strokes to accompany singing and dancing in its folk context.

"It seeks to rediscover the national past through musical means that are distinctively innovative and original. It represents a unique amalgamation of influences from the pre-modern past, imperial and Soviet legacies, as well as contemporary global tastes and local expectations."

The concert by Izumrud will take place at 8pm on November 15 (Friday) at the Auditorium, Sha Tin Town Hall. Tickets are priced at \$120, \$180 and \$220, and are now available at URBIX (www.urbtix.hk). For telephone credit card bookings, please call 2111 5999. For programme enquiries and concessionary schemes, please call 2268 7321 or visit www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/CulturalService/Programme/en/music/programs_882.html.