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COOPERATION FOUNDATION

WELCOMES YOU TO THE

BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF

“A HERO FOR ALL TIMES”

Mikhail Yuryevich Lermontov
POET, PROPHET, PATRIOT

THURSDAY, APRIL 24, 2014
6:30 PM - RECEPTION WITH EXHIBITION
7:00 PM - PROGRAM
BUFFET RECEPTION TO FOLLOW

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
JAMES MADISON BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC
Mikhail Yuryevich Lermontov

“Truth has always been my value.”

Mikhail Lermontov’s short life was as poetic as his verse. His meteoric rise and sudden tragic death cast him as a mythic figure in the canon of Russian literature, comparable to other literary greats of his time such as Lord Byron, Edgar Allan Poe and Charles Baudelaire. Born in Moscow in 1814, he was of Scottish descent on his father’s side, possibly as far back as the legendary Thomas Learmonth the Rhymer. His Russian mother was of the aristocratic Stolypin family, which produced generations of statesmen and military leaders. She died when he was quite young and he was raised by his maternal grandmother, who provided him with a lavish life and an extensive education.

Blessed with many talents, Lermontov directed his seemingly boundless energy into the world of imagination and creativity, excelling as a poet, writer, dramatist, musician and artist. Despite belonging to the aristocratic class, he insisted on challenging its key values. Alexander Pushkin’s early death in 1837 greatly affected Lermontov. His powerful and scathing elegy, “Death of a Poet,” directly challenged the Tsar and the elite of St. Petersburg and blamed them for the premature and tragic loss of Russia’s greatest poet. The poem caused an uproar and Lermontov was arrested and exiled to serve in a regiment in the Caucasus to fight against local tribesmen, with whom he rather sympathized. He had previously spent time in the Caucasus as a young boy and was drawn to and inspired by its exotic landscapes, poetry and folklore.

In 1838, Lermontov was allowed to return to his regiment in St. Petersburg, where his popularity as a poet was growing. But after a duel with the son of the French Ambassador in St. Petersburg in 1840, he was reassigned back to the Caucasus, where he distinguished himself as a courageous and heroic soldier. This was also a period for him of prolific literary production and accomplishment.

Born 15 years after Pushkin, he too exerted a major influence on Russian literary language and culture. Pushkin nurtured progressive ideas in the 1820s and Lermontov followed suit in the 1830s, challenging conventional Russian attitudes toward life, literature and art. Lermontov touched on a great variety of themes—from his poem about the Patriotic War of 1812 (known by heart by almost every Russian), to passionate lyrics about the beauty of love and moving descriptions of nature. He also addressed many deep and philosophical themes, which were unusual for his time and his youth. Lermontov created his own innovative style, made significant contributions to the development of Russian poetry and prose, and gave birth to the Russian psychological novel, “A Hero of Our Time,” which acquired worldwide fame, with over 200 million copies in print. It has been translated into 33 languages.

From his works it is clear he had an uncanny ability to see into the future. He not only foresaw the inevitable revolution in Russia, but he predicted his own untimely death. Lermontov was tragically killed in a duel in 1841, in a haunting parallel to Pushkin’s life, yet he remains in the minds of Russians, as if a contemporary. As the name of his celebrated novel proclaims, he is “A Hero of our Time.”
No, I’m not Byron

No, I’m not Byron, it’s my role
To be an undiscovered wonder,
Like him, a persecuted wand’rer,
But furnished with a Russian soul.

I started sooner, sooner ending,
My mind will never reach so high;
Within my soul, beyond the mending,
My shattered aspirations lie;
Dark ocean answer me, can any
Plumb all your depth with skillful trawl?
Who will explain me to the many?
I…perhaps God? No one at all?

Translated by Alan Myers
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A SPECIAL THANK YOU

DR. JAMES H. BILLINGTON
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for sharing with us his incredible knowledge of Russia, her arts, culture, literature and history; for his understanding of the importance of continuing cultural relations between America and Russia, especially at the present time; for his spirited generosity and support of this celebration of Mikhail Lermontov, and for his faith in us and our mission.

AND TO

SUSAN CARMEL LEHRMAN
TONIGHT’S MAJOR SPONSOR, VALUED MEMBER OF THE BOARD, AND FOUNDER OF THE INITIATIVE FOR RUSSIAN CULTURE AT AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

In addition to her boundless enthusiasm, unflagging support, and belief in the value of cultural diplomacy, we are especially grateful for her navigational skills which, by way of tonight’s program, are helping to keep the ship of cultural dialog buoyed and safe.

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OUR DEEP APPRECIATION
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American University is proud of the accomplishments of the Initiative for Russian Culture (IRC) now in its fourth year. The IRC promotes the understanding of all things Russian among American students. We believe that students will profit greatly from the film screenings, theatrical performances, musical concerts, conferences and symposiums that IRC organizes.

visit [www.american.edu/cas/irc](http://www.american.edu/cas/irc) for more information
It is difficult to find another writer who has done as much for mutual understanding between America and Russia as Yevtushenko. He was inspired in his childhood by the historical encounter of American and Russian soldiers on the River Elbe in May 1945, becoming the first Russian poet to promote the spirit of the Elbe in the climate of the Cold War.

He has been described by the American media as a Russian mixture of Walt Whitman and Bob Dylan. His first reading in America was at Harvard in 1961. When he returned to Russia he published his thunderous poem “Babi Yar” against antisemitism, breaking a conspiracy of silence in the USSR. Soon afterwards, the great Russian composer Dmitri Shostakovich created his famous 13th Symphony based on five of Yevtushenko’s poems. In 1961, Yevtushenko was featured on the cover of Time. In 1966, he toured 27 American universities, and in 1972 gave an unprecedented poetry concert to a capacity crowd in Madison Square Garden. He befriended many American political leaders and such leading cultural lights as Robert Frost, Carl Sandburg, John Steinbeck, Arthur Miller, John Updike, John Cheever, Edward Albee, Leonard Bernstein, Louis Armstrong and Stanley Kramer.

Yevtushenko was awarded the American Liberties Medallion—the highest honor of the American Jewish Committee, and Russia’s “Defender of Freedom” Medal. He has performed in 96 countries and his work has been translated into 72 languages. An honorary member of the American and European Academies of Arts and Sciences, distinguished professor of the University of Tulsa and an honorary citizen of many American cities, Yevtushenko is a living testament to US-Russia concord.
THE HONORABLE GRIGORY PETROVICH IVLIEV
DEPUTY MINISTER OF CULTURE FOR THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

MIKHAIL YURIEVICH LERMONTOV
Patriarch of Lermontov family,
Member of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation and
President of the Lermontov Heritage Association

YEVGENY ALEXANDROVICH YEVTUSHENKO
Russian poet

VASSILY IGOREVICH NESTERENKO
People’s artist of the Russian Federation

VALENTINA BRONISLAVOVNA LENTSOVA
Director of the House-Museum of Mikhail Lermontov, Moscow

YELENA GENNADIEVNA KRASILNIKOVA
Representative from the State Lermontov Museum, Tarkhany Preserve

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Executive Manager of the Memorial Lermontov Center at the Manor Serednikova
And wife of M.Yu. Lermontov

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Vice President, Lermontov Heritage Association
Lermontov expert and author

SERGEY EVGENYEVICH LERMONTOV
Grandson of M.Yu. Lermontov

MARIA YEVTUSHENKO
Wife of Yevgeny Yevtushenko
Lermontov is immortalized by many magnificent monuments stretching throughout Russia. In Moscow and Saint Petersburg, and countless other cities and towns, one is likely to glimpse a monument to Lermontov in a vista, park or square. Forever restless and youthful, whether surrounded by grand estates, humble buildings, or the Caucasus mountains that he loved since childhood, Lermontov looms large, cherished and not forgotten. For Russia is a nation that reveres its earthly heroes as much as its sacred icons, and perhaps none higher than its poets. These monuments testify to Russia’s love and appreciation for literature, and more specifically this beloved author. Lermontov’s fame is reflected in the multiple and varied monuments to him and his great legacy, which he left to Russia, and the world.

Maria Kontak

THE AMERICAN-RUSSIAN CULTURAL COOPERATION FOUNDATION is grateful to the following cultural organizations and institutions in Russia for graciously providing their vast expertise and materials for use in tonight’s celebration:

HOUSE-MUSEUM OF M.Y. LERMONTOV, MOSCOW
LERMONTOV STATE MUSEUM-PRESERVE “TARKHANY”
LERMONTOV STATE MUSEUM-PRESERVE, PYATIGORSK
THE STATE TRETYAKOV GALLERY
PUSHKIN HOUSE LITERARY MUSEUM, MOSCOW
MOSCOW LERMONTOV SOCIETY
ASSOCIATION “LERMONTOV HERITAGE,” MOSCOW-MANOR SEREDNIKOVO
Serednikovo Manor

It is here that Lermontov dreamt, read and wrote his early poems.

Serednikovo Manor is one of the most famous Lermontov sites in Russia. Located in the suburbs north of Moscow, it is representative of the Golden Age of Russian architecture. Its park-like setting, tiny roads, slumbering pond, and brick bridges keep the legacy of Mikhail Yuryevich Lermontov alive. It is here that he dreamt, read and wrote his early poems.

For nearly 150 years the estate was owned by the Yegupov-Cherkasskie Princes. In the late 18th century it belonged to Senator Vsevolod Alekseevich Vsevolozhsky. He created the manor we know today, including a stud farm, stables, gardens, greenhouses and workshops, and a tin factory. In 1825, Serednikovo was purchased by General Dmitry A. Stolypin, brother of Lermontov’s grandmother Elizaveta Alekseevna Arsenieva, and since then it has remained in the Stolypin family.

The young Mikhail Lermontov summered here from 1829 to 1832, making this the most important time in the history of the manor. The house was filled with young carefree guests who planned long walks, boat rides, horse rides, read poems and sang together. There was a large library where Lermontov liked to read. At night he loved to wander the shore of the pond, go to the village cemetery, or sit by his window and write poems. His relative, Ekaterina Arkadievna Stolypina, often played the piano, expanding his interests in music.

The “Lermontov Heritage Association” (www.justgorussia.co.uk/en/serednikovo) was established in 1991 to preserve, restore and develop the estate, signaling a new stage in the history of the manor as a museum, an architectural monument of the late 18th century, and as a cultural landmark.
Our special guest, and one of tonight’s speakers, is Mikhail Yuryevich Lermontov, a direct descendant of the Scottish nobleman and then Russian warrior George Leirmont (Learmonth), founder of the Russian noble Lermontov family in 1613, and is a sixth generation descendent of the supreme poet we celebrate tonight. His full name is the complete namesake of the great Mikhail Yuryevich Lermontov.

Mikhail Lermontov was born in the city of Pyatigorsk, where the poet was killed in a duel. Lermontov holds a PhD in the Technical Sciences, and another in Culturology, and serves as Assistant to the Russian Minister of Culture. In 2012, he was nominated “Man of the Year” by the Russian Institute of Biography for his contributions to Russian culture and for his work in expanding knowledge about the poet Mikhail Lermontov. In 2013, Lermontov was recognized by the Russian Government for educational activity in promoting Russian poetry. In 2014 he became a member of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation.

In 1991, Mikhail Lermontov initiated the “Lermontov Heritage Association,” and was selected President by the members of this remarkable family. The goal of the Association is to bring together family members from around the world, to study the family’s history, and to promote the legacy of the famous poet Mikhail Lermontov. Since 1992, Lermontov and his wife Elena have been instrumental in restoring Serednikovo Manor, located near Moscow, where Lermontov spent four summers during his youth and where he was inspired to write many marvelous poems. It contains the Lermontov Memorial Center, a center for cultural education.
Musical Program

Illustrations by other artists of Lermontov’s writings.

TERRY BARBER
COUNTertenor

This rare countertenor uses extraordinary vocal range, versatility, and a Masters degree in historically informed performance, to entertain. A truly international artist, Mr. Barber has been a soloist for the Metropolitan Opera, Carnegie Hall, London’s Queen Elizabeth Hall, and Moscow’s Svetlanov Hall, to name a few. Mr. Barber was a full time member of the Grammy-winning ensemble Chanticleer and his voice can be heard on every major record label with a range of artists from Madonna to the London Philharmonic. He received his Bachelor of Music degree from Northwestern University and holds a Master’s degree in music performance from London’s Trinity College of Music. In 2009 Barber founded the nonprofit organization Artists for a Cause which creates professional and educational opportunities for visual and performing artists.

ALINA KIRYAYEVA
PIANIST

Acclaimed pianist Alina Kiryayeva performed her first solo recital at age eight and her solo debut with an orchestra at the age of 11. Ms. Kiryayeva has toured Russia, Mexico, France, Germany, Austria, Italy, Holland, Japan and the United States. In recent seasons she has performed with the Kharkov State Philharmonic and State Opera Theatre Orchestras, The Imperial Valley Symphony orchestra, and New York Symphonic Ensemble Orchestra.
“A HERO FOR ALL TIMES”

Mikhail Yuryevich Lermontov

POET, PROPHET, PATRIOT

Order of the Evening

WELCOME
Dr. James H. Billington
Librarian of Congress

GREETINGS
His Excellency Sergey I. Kislyak
Ambassador of the Russian Federation

GUEST SPEAKERS
Mikhail Yuryevich Lermontov
Patriarch of the Lermontov Family

Yevgeny Yevtushenko
Russian Poet

MUSICAL INTERLUDE *

Ne Plach, Ditya          Anton Rubinstein
(Weep not, my child, do not weep in vain!)
from the Opera “The Demon”

Parus (Sail)            Alexander Feht

“No, it is not you I love so ardently”
Alexey Shishkin

Terry Barber ~ countertenor
Alina Kiryayeva ~ piano

PRESENTATIONS

CLOSING

*All musical selections in our program this evening are based on the words and poems of M. Yu. Lermontov.
Those of us who have the great privilege to live in today’s world often underestimate the collective value of the books on our shelves. Of course, the click of a finger or swipe of a card can easily procure for us hundreds of literary works, but only when we turn that final page do we fully understand the true value of any given book.

The books of Russia and the books of the United States are priceless, as they keep our two nations forever intertwined in dialogue.

Books were Lermontov’s treasures. He had the opportunity to study many great works, including those by Goethe, Schiller, Shakespeare, and Byron, yet it was American literature that captured most of his imagination. His fascination with America’s literature was reciprocated by Americans, and has been passed down for generations. In constructing parallels between American and Russian literature we note that he and his American contemporaries were among the first to give “the other” a human face. Lermontov conveyed a new sympathy and a yearning to understand the tribesman of the Caucasus in his work, while the same was being done in America by 19th century authors such as James Fenimore Cooper, Henry David Thoreau, and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and eventually, and perhaps most notably, Mark Twain.

The reality and honesty of the written accounts by Lermontov mirror those that were being composed in the United States, with a desire to understand more of the surrounding world as the central theme. Works such as *A Hero of Our Time* have, therefore, remained relevant in both Russia and the US because they serve as the proverbial invisible bridge between the two cultures. They survive because they foster a new dialogue, a sort of literary diplomacy.

Since the days of Benjamin Franklin and Mikhail Lomonosov, literature has been the cornerstone of American-Russian cultural relations. Tolstoy, Chekhov, Dostoevsky, Faulkner, and Whitman have become household names in both countries, their works serving as mediators of cultural comprehension. American-Russian literary canons construct the greatest avenue for cultural exchange, as they are often the first exposure to the mysterious “other” in young American and Russian minds. These literary traditions take root in a shared “Lermontovian” desire to understand our counterparts, and our stories serve as quiet, yet persistent diplomats, ensuring that two great peoples do not let the goal of amicable relations slip their minds.

Therefore, we must not undervalue our books, as they provide us with a million open windows, allowing us to better understand one another and the world that surrounds us.

*Max Shelton  
American-Russian Cultural Cooperation Foundation*
While engrossed in Mikhail Lermontov’s *A Hero of Our Time*, the average reader should not, perhaps, look for opportunities to be reminded of James Fenimore Cooper. However, the fact is that the great American contemporary author was on Lermontov’s mind when he was penning his own novel.

In his review of *A Hero of Our Time*, Vissarion Belinsky, leading Russian literary critic of the day, immediately recognized similarities to Cooper’s *The Leather-Stocking Tales*: pristine environment of wilderness, native tribes, and an army officer scout were featured in both—but in these obvious similarities between the Russian and American novels Belinsky saw neither emulation nor plagiarism. In his opinion, Lermontov was consciously following in the steps of his American predecessor.

Belinsky knew this first-hand because less than two months after Lermontov’s novel was published the two had a 4-hour conversation where they discussed the two towering figures in current literature, Sir Walter Scott and James Fenimore Cooper, and came to the unanimous conclusion that the American writer surpassed his British mentor, having come closer to modern times in his presentation of Western civilization into the new frontier. In other words, he presented past and present in collision at the moment when the world was in flux due to the Industrial Revolution, the American War of Independence, the French Revolution, and the Napoleonic Wars.

Lermontov’s *A Hero of Our Time* portrayed a Russian version of characters and conflicts the Russian reading public was already familiar

Continued on page 16
with from the five-novel saga by James Fenimore Cooper. Lermontov’s version of Cooper’s ‘Natty Bumppo’ is Maksim Maksimych, a seasoned army officer who has served all his life in the Caucasus Mountains and is an unassuming, humble man of dignity and honor. Maksimych resembles Bumppo in his compassion and self-sacrifice, and in that he fights his adversaries while simultaneously respecting them for their bravery. A character resembling Natty Bumppo was also recreated by Tolstoy in the form of Uncle Yaroshka, a huntsman in the novel The Cossacks.

The protagonist of Lermontov’s novel, Pechorin, is a man full of contradictions, he is endowed with all one can dream of: rank, fortune, a shrewd mind, good looks, and a magnetic personality (especially to women), but he lacks purpose in life. He is a homeless aristocrat, a wanderer, who contemplates travel to far off Arabia, India, and America. It was at a time before mass emigration to America, and going abroad was an option for only the chosen few who led lives of leisure and luxury. Pechorin did not go to America, he went to Persia, and there he found his end. Dostoevsky carried on the tradition of the Russian gentry “going to America” in pursuit of spiritual transformation in The Brothers Karamazov. And who and what gave Dmitry Karamazov the idea of going to the country of the Mohicans? Evidently it was his reading of the Leather-Stocking novels by Cooper.

In 1985, the author of this essay and his friend, American journalist Mr. Henry Cooper, great-grandson of James Fenimore, went to Moscow and visited the museum house of Sergei Korolev, the famous spacecraft designer. The first thing we saw were shelves, heavily laden with books, and most prominent, upon them—Russian translations of James Fenimore Cooper’s Collected Works. “Why so?” Henry Cooper asked our guide. “Korolev’s favorite reading,” was the reply. When Henry asked why, the guide replied “Frontier!” followed by “and pursuit of the unknown.” The guide continued with another story about how Russians at that time were more and more curious about space exploration. The astronauts sent back only technical descriptions of their out-of-Earth experiences, but the people wanted something more graphic and expressive. It was suggested that a journalist be sent into space, to which Korolev responded: “If we could send there a poet, like Lermontov!” The spacecraft designer could remember at the moment lines from Lermontov’s narrative poem The Demon:

\[
\text{O’er the ocean depths of sky} \\
\text{Mark the shining orbs that roll} \\
\text{Sail-less, helmless, to their goal,} \\
\text{Ever quiring sphere on sphere.}
\]  
(Tr. Alexander Condie Stephen)

Professor Dmitry Urnov  
(Tr. Nastassia Urnov)
Not only are there monuments and memorials honoring Lermontov stretching to the furthest corners of Russia, but his significance in Russia is so great that Planet #2222, a Crater on Mercury, and Lermontov Cape in Crimea also bear his name. Lermontov is remembered and revered as an outstanding, great, and distinguished poet. However, it is speculated that his fame as an accomplished visual artist would have been lauded as equally as his skills as a poet had he not been struck down in a duel, at the age of 26.

As recorded in the memoirs of his contemporaries, Lermontov began drawing before he began composing poetry. At first self-taught, he later studied drawing under Alexander Solonitskiy. In 1836-37 he took classes with the prominent Russian artist Pyotr Zabolotsky, whose portrait of Lermontov graces our cover. Lermontov’s artistic talent was very broad; he created portraits, landscapes, battle scenes, caricatures, and animal sketches, in pencil, charcoal, watercolor and oil. He drew rapidly, as if hoping to capture his impressions and emotions on paper as quickly as possible. Everything he experienced in a given moment seemed to be jotted down on paper or put to canvas. As a painter, Lermontov was not aloof from his subjects, and his relationship to them is easily guessed. Lermontov’s Caucasus landscapes are colorful, lush and picturesque,
almost dreamlike, while his portraits are done with striking truthfulness. His caricatures were, at times, bitingly cruel to their recipients, yet ruthlessly accurate.

As a member of the aristocracy, he traveled often as a youth. After he completed his military schooling he traveled with his Hussar (light cavalry) Regiment, by nature a nomadic lifestyle. Then Lermontov was exiled twice to the Caucasus. As a result, only a portion of his art portfolio remains. However, the works that remain allow us to conclude that his drawings and paintings did not serve merely as entertainment for an errant officer. They are a diary comprised of artwork which, together with his literary legacy, gives us an opportunity to view the world through the eyes of the great Lermontov.

Natalie Kuptsova, Member
Moscow Lermontov Society

Portrait of A. Stolypin-Mongo in a costume of Kurd.
M.Yu. Lermontov. 1841.
Water color.

Field Day in Tsarskoye Selo.
M.Yu. Lermontov. 1833-1834.
Sepia.

Portrait of Varvara Lopukhina as Emilia, the heroine in “Spaniards,” a drama of M.Yu. Lermontov.
M.Yu. Lermontov.
Water color.
1830-31.
Lermontov as Inspiration

Illustrations by other artists of Lermontov’s writings.

The first significant illustration of Lermontov poetry appeared in 1852 when Russian artist Nikolai N. Ge was inspired by the poem “Khaji-Abrek.” Many tried to follow, but it was difficult to convey the dramatic and symbolic content of his work. The turning point came in the 1890s in Moscow when artist Pyotr P. Konchalovsky gathered 18 brilliant artists to illustrate Lermontov’s collected works, including Repin, Vasnetsov, Surikov, Serov, Pasternak, and Vrubel. Mikhail Vrubel became obsessed with Lermontov’s mystical poem “The Demon.” He and Lermontov appeared to be linked by some invisible thread of deep understanding and expression. Vrubel’s “Seated Demon,” is as well-known as Auguste Rodin’s “The Thinker.” His illustration “Duel,” for the novel “A Hero of Our Time,” shown here on page 19, became the ultimate tragic symbol of Lermontov’s death.

Tatiana Molchanova, PhD.

