

# HERMITAGE MUSEUM FOUNDATION *NEWSLETTER*



September 2010  
V1, Issue Two



Dear Friends & Supporters:

This summer's White Nights tour was simply great! Masha Tolstoy Sarandinaki and her network of friends in St. Petersburg combined to create an unforgettable series of visits. A wonderful group of friends who participated. Many thanks to each and every one of you!

Our spring program of educational outreach events included lectures by Cynthia Whitaker and Peter Schaffer. The reception graciously hosted by the Ana Tzarev Gallery in New York in honor of Gordon Lankton's icon exhibition was a huge success with almost 300 guests attending. In addition, we showed *The Hermitage Dwellers* at the Russian Cultural Center in Washington, DC, and were warmly received by Vyacheslav Moshkalo, Cultural Attaché representing the Russian Embassy.

We also had the pleasure of the dedicated and productive assistance this summer from our first intern, R.J. Dabbar. Thank you for a job well done! You are welcome any time.

Finally, we can now proudly announce two gifts that we have facilitated to the Hermitage: a valuable collection of Urartu artifacts donated by Mr. Torkom Demirjian and a number of gifts for restoration from Dr. Sosnovsky. Please read the attached articles. Our heartfelt thanks to the generosity of these two gentlemen!

We are picking up the pace dramatically this fall. Program details appear on the last page, highlighted by Dr. & Mrs. Piotrovsky's visit from November 3-8.

Thank you all for your support of the HMF!

Paul Rodzianko, Chairman



*Hermitage Theater, St. Petersburg, Russia. Photo by Oksana Meleshkina*



*Dr. & Mrs. Piotrovsky, Mrs. Sarandinaki, Mr. Rodzianko*

## SAVE THE DATE

**Tuesday, October 12<sup>th</sup>**

**"Yul Brynner's Family in Russia"**

Presentation by **ROCK BRYNNER**

**Thursday, November 4<sup>th</sup>**

**ANASTASIA KHITRUK**

Concert & Reception at **Russian Consulate**

**Saturday, November 6<sup>th</sup>**

**"Treasures into Tractors" Symposium**

Introduction by **Dr. MIKHAIL B. PIOTROVSKY**

**Saturday, November 6<sup>th</sup>**

**"Hermitage Dinner" honoring**

**JAMES ROSENQUIST & VITALY KOMAR**

**Christie's**

**Thursday, December 9<sup>th</sup>**

**Russian Ornaments, Postcards and  
Preview of "Russian Fairy Tales"**

## *Will the Real Fabergé Please Stand Up*, a presentation by Peter Schaffer at Doubles, New York, May 4, 2010

Commentary and drawings by Taisha Hutchison



*Drawing of Rhinoceros Match Holder and Striker. Sandstone, silver and garnets, 4" height*



*Drawing of Vara Panina. Aventurine quartz, jasper, quartz, purpurine, calcite and other Russian hard stones, diamonds, gold and silver, 7" height*

"The quality goes in before the name goes on," according to Peter Schaffer, President of the HMF and owner of the illustrious A La Vieille Russie, founded by his family in 1851 and presently, the pre-eminent source of Fabergé in the United States. Peter gave a vivid and full coverage of Fabergé. By carefully interspersing a fake amongst the real, we began to spot the odd man out. Peter showed us why.

The slide lecture acted as a mirror to some of the greats of history and their associates, as often times Fabergé would be commissioned to commemorate Royal visits, emblems of love, or personages of stature.

Fabergé made more than 400,000 pieces in his time. His ability to piece together his works like clockwork meant that more pieces could be produced. It was meaningful that Schaffer himself has a depth of knowledge acquired by seeing the work from childhood. At an early age he identified a fake which his father brought home - a fine Swiss rendition!

Highlights of the lecture included a "Potato," which had been filmed for "National Geographic", with a custom hinge top. We were privy to musical eggs, a bison, carved from ruby, an Imperial egg - one of Peter's favorites depicting Peter the Great, on a carved emerald rock, with the St. Petersburg, sunset behind him, and a Danish Royal Family egg with concertinaed historical scenes.

Just as Fabergé eggs, animals and small portraits have stood the test of time, so they have traveled the globe. Queen Sirikit of Thailand prays each day to her emerald Buddha, (it is actually made in jade). Presentation boxes were often gifts to significant others or heads of state; Nathaniel Rothschild gave mementos decorated with his blue and yellow racing colors.

Two of the more unusual items shown were a dandelion, made with a gold stem, topped by asbestos, and a careful rendition in hardstone of the "ugliest woman in Russia," Vara Panina, a gypsy gifted with the most amazing voice.

Just as a great sculptor may find the form within the stone itself, before determining the outcome of the complete sculpture, so too, did Fabergé find a choice gemstone such as a star sapphire as centerpiece to a magnificent brooch.

I recall Peter saying, "the work or quality goes in before the (Fabergé) name goes on." - to recognize the artistry, invention and timeless charm of the Fabergé tradition which is known the world over.



*Drawing of Dandelion Puff Ball. Gold stem and platinum stamens topped by asbestos fibers, diamonds, nephrite and rock crystal, 7.5" height*

