

## Preview

### Russian Duo kicks off Music by Nature series in Cuyahoga Valley National Park on June 9

by Mike Telin



On Sunday, June 9 beginning at 6:30 pm at the Happy Days Lodge in Cuyahoga Valley National Park, [Music By Nature](#) presents [Russian Duo](#), Oleg Kruglyakov, balalaika & Terry Boyarsky, piano in a concert featuring Russian, classical, Soviet & folk music. As always, Music By Nature audiences are invited to picnic on the grounds beginning at 5 pm, and a dessert reception follows the performance.

Although the combination of balalaika and piano may seem a bit unusual, Terry Boyarsky and Oleg Kruglyakov think the variety of musical styles that are included in their nature-inspired program highlight the range of possibilities the combination of instruments are capable of producing. “I think the idea is that we are taking music from different parts of the planet and blending them [together] with these instruments and it does sound like nature re-united, like the United Nations,” says Kruglyakov.

In addition to arrangements of Russian folk songs, the program includes the *Korobushka Concert Variations*, a work that depicts a rural Russian setting and *Banya*, a traditional song about a Russian steam bath. Matvei Blanter’s *Katyusha* is a World War II song about a woman walking by the shores of a river. “It was popular with both the Russians and the Germans,” says Kruglyakov, who adds that the song is often played on the harmonica. Boyarsky describes it as “An idyllic song that talks about apple and pear trees that are in bloom with an eagle overhead — you will get the picture of mother nature.” And what summer concert would be complete without a visit to South America — and the Brazilian Carnival classic *Tico Tico* fills that slot nicely. “We’re performing music that tells Stories about the Cuckoo, the nightingale, and the Tico Tico, none of which live in the United States,” Boyarsky jokes.

The concert also features original music for Balalaika and piano including Evgeny Trostyansky’s *Grotesque & Reflection*, written in the 1980’s, and Kruglyakov will show off his vocal skills during Vasily Solovyov-Sedoi’s *Moscow Nights*. “It’s a city song,” Boyarsky points out, “but musically it works.” Arrangements of classical music include *Kukushka*, by French baroque composer Louis-Claude Daquin, *Passacaglia* by Handel and a *Slavonic Dance* of Antonín Dvořák.

If you're wondering how Terry Boyarsky and Oleg Kruglyakov came to form Russian Duo, in a 2011 interview with this publication, Kruglyakov told us that he had only been living in the United States for a short period of time and while searching the web for possible collaborators, "I found Terry's Web page on the Ohio Arts Council Web site. I saw that she was a collaborative pianist, and an ethnomusicologist, so I thought she might be interested in the balalaika, so I sent her an e-mail with a sample of my music."

What did Boyarsky think when she received an e-mail from a balalaika player? "My first thought was that I had played chamber music with every instrument that I know of, including double bass, harp, and trombone. But the balalaika? While it sounded intriguing, I wondered what could possibly be there, repertoire-wise, for piano and balalaika? So I thought I would do it for fun. I did go to his YouTube videos and listened to him, and I was very impressed with his virtuosity. But when he arrived and explained exactly how much music was written for piano and balalaika, I was blown away...It has been a great learning experience."

To find out more about Russian Duo, the balalaika and the position it plays in the Russian Conservatory system, you can read the complete 2011 feature [here](#).

Music by Nature concerts continue on Sunday, July 7 with a performance by the River Bottom Quartet and on Sunday, August 4 with *The Wind Machine* with vocalist Helen Welch.

*Published on clevelandclassical.com June 4, 2013*