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## GOLDEN GATES/MOSCOW NIGHTS PERFORMS IN ATLANTA

by Irene Perloff McCullough

Atlantans had a rare treat on Saturday, February 6 when the St. Petersburg, Russia-based youth ensemble, Golden Gates, performed an hour and a half show of Russian folk music, song and dance at the Dunwoody, GA Public Library.

Accompanied by the virtuosic balalaika-bayan-contrabass trio, Moscow Nights, the Golden Gates performers, ranging from 12 to 18 years of age, presented a dazzling selection of folk songs and dances from the diverse areas of Russia and Ukraine, including songs of Siberia, the Cossacks, and kadrils and humorous songs that brought members of the audience up to learn dances and play percussion.

Led by bayanist Vitaliy Bezrodnov, Moscow Nights was formed in Kaluga, Russia in the late 1980's. Currently based in Raleigh, N.C., this prize-winning trio tours year-round, collaborating with Golden Gates in January and February. We got a taste of Moscow Nights' virtuosity in their performance of "Ah, Bereza" and a demonstration of prima balalaika technique when the amazing balalaikist Sergei Pudov performed a section of Pavel Necheporenko's transcription of "Variations on a Theme by Paganini."



The eleven touring members of Golden Gates are part of a select group of about 100 students who attend the Author's Aesthetic Music Secondary School in St. Petersburg, where they receive intensive instruction in Russian character dance and folk singing, as well as the Russian culture that their performances portray.

The idea behind the Golden Gates/Moscow Nights tour happened in conversations between Vitaliy Bezrodnov and Golden Gates' director, Marina Tourlyguina, who met while they were in conservatory together. Marina, who accompanies them on the tours, looked like a proud but exacting mother as she watched the show from the audience, offering the occasional non-verbal cue from her chair.

Each year a different group from the school is selected for the January/February tour of the U.S., and Golden Gates/Moscow Nights are already planning their 2011 U.S. tour. The tour schedule is very busy, sometimes with two school shows and an evening concert in one day! BDAA members should try to see both Golden Gates and Moscow Nights. There's a lot of great information, YouTube clips and performance schedules of both groups on Vitaliy's website, [www.Russianfolk.com](http://www.Russianfolk.com)

