

## **Historical view of Yale Russian Chorus activities**

### **1953 - 1959**

**1953-54** The Yale Russian Chorus formed by **Denis Mickiewicz** (founding conductor) and **George Litton** (Russian Club president) as an offshoot of the Yale Russian Club.

**May 13, 1954** First public performance of the YRC in Yale's Hall of Graduate Studies.

**March 6, 1955** Benefit concert for the Tolstoy Foundation at New Haven's YMCA. Tape of concert was broadcast to USSR on Radio Free Europe.

**March 11, 1956** Second benefit concert for the Tolstoy Foundation at New Haven's YMCA.

**Fall 1957** Denis Mickiewicz and Kit Bingham (Yale Russian Club president) were the only returning YRC members. New members desperately needed.

**April 25, 1958** YRC participated in 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Glee Club Jamboree in Woolsey Hall.

**April 26, 1958** Glinka's *A Life for the Czar (Ivan Susanin)*, Act I, performed in concert version in Yale's Sprague Hall with assistance of members of New Haven Symphony. First US performance of the original version.

**Summer 1958** First tour to USSR following the signing of the Lacy-Zarubin Agreement on cultural exchange between USA and USSR in January 1958. First American group to visit USSR as a private initiative. YRC's first experiences in cultural exchange, singing

informal "concerts" for Russians and discussing everything imaginable.

**Fall 1958** YRC began series of seminar-concerts at American universities on its experiences and thoughts on cultural exchange with the USSR.

**Fall 1958** First YRC record (LP) issued under Carillon label (produced by Yale's Elliott Kone).

**May 1959** Reader's Digest article on YRC appeared, "To Russia, With Music", based on an account written by Charles Neff.

**Summer 1959** Second tour to USSR, along with the Dwiki Mitchell-Willie Ruff jazz duo, who performed the first jazz concert in Moscow's Tchaikovsky Conservatory.

**July-August 1959** Members of YRC attended the Vienna World Youth Festival as part of US "counter-delegation".