

# Second Russia Day gala twice as nice

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Prince Piotr Galitzine (from left), Ambassador Sergey I. Kislyak, and Aleksandra Efimova

Chicago Sister Cities International

177 N. State St., Chicago; (312) 201-4525 or [chicagosisintercities.com](http://chicagosisintercities.com); Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington; (312) 744-1372 or [explorechicago.org/chicagoculturalcenter](http://explorechicago.org/chicagoculturalcenter)

**The Event:** While some twos may be terrible, in the case of the second annual Russia Day celebration, the second time around was actually twice as nice. More than 250 Russian nationals and Americans gathered inside the Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington, on June 14 for a black-tie gala to commemorate the occasion.

Hosted by the Moscow Committee of Chicago Sister Cities International, the anniversary honored the date of June 12, 1990, when the Russian parliament formally declared sovereignty over the country.

**Cause Célèbre:** Luminaries from Russia's current political landscape and existing royalty were in attendance along with notable local professionals and celebrities from the Russian community. Guests were treated to a sumptuous feast of authentic Russian delicacies before the pageantry of presentations began, featuring Russian songs performed by the Campanella Children's Choir, an excerpt from "Cinderella" by the Joffrey Ballet Academy, a selection from the opera "Eugene Onegin" performed by artists from the Lyric Opera's Ryan Center and several selections by 75 members of the Chicago Master Singers.

"It was absolutely a great success," said gala chairman Aleksandra Efimova. "I was so pleased to be able to introduce Russian culture to so many Americans and to inspire Russians to have a sense of pride in our homeland."

“The goodwill and gratitude for putting on such an event was palpable,” said gala co-chairman Prince Piotr Galitzine, whose great-great-grandfather is said to have once commissioned a piece from Beethoven.

And ambassador of Russia to the United States, Sergey I. Kislyak, noted that what he found most significant “is that people build bridges. People want to have good relations on both sides, in Russia and in the U.S. Events like this is exactly what is needed to bring people together and I appreciate very much what Chicagoans do on this score.”