

# The Moscow Times

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18+



“When I hear about Zoya, I had a feeling that I went very far back in time” - writer **Ludmila Ulitskaya**

## In 2015

authorities searched 10 Open Russia premises.

12

officers from Russia's Investigative Committee were present during the raid.



“This search looks like a blatant attempt by the authorities to interfere with her journalism” - **Sergei Nikitin**, Director of Amnesty International Russia

# Then They Came for Svetova

By **Oliver Carroll** o.carroll@imedia.ru

An unexpected law enforcement raid at the home of long-time journalist and rights activist Zoya Svetova raises fears of repression

For much of the day on Tuesday, Feb. 28, the image of a central Moscow stairwell occupied the national news. There, a gaggle of journalists, artists and writers stood waiting, photographing and filming outside the apartment of journalist and activist Zoya Svetova.

On the other side of the door, a dozen law enforcement operatives were conducting a search of Svetova's family home. According to an official statement published on the Investigative Committee's website, the raid was part of a criminal investigation into YUKOS, the oil company once owned by exiled oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky.

Svetova is perhaps the most prominent contributor to “Open Russia,” a media platform founded and funded by Khodorkovsky. As a journalist, she has grown famous for aggressive investigations on subjects like corruption, activism, and torture. As an activist, she made her mark as a critic of the penal system and a defender of political prisoners' rights.

But her name is equally synonymous with the dissident movement in general. She is the daughter of persecuted Soviet writer Felix Svetov and has a wide circle of friends in Moscow's liberal intelligentsia.

Speaking at the end of the ten-hour ordeal, Svetova told journalists it was not the first time authorities had searched her family home. The previous occasion, she said, was in early 1985, when the Soviet police state was at its peak.



Zoya Svetova has criticized the Russian penal system and campaigned for political prisoners' rights.

They arrested her father that day.

“Just imagine: Thirty years pass, and once again you get the knock on your door,” Svetova said. “When they were looking through the apartment, they even found the original search protocol and recognized the colleagues who had signed it — I'd thought they were long dead.”

Writing on Facebook, Svetova's lawyer, Anna Stavitskaya, said investigators were using a 14-year-old criminal case as the formal pretext of the raid. Svetova is, in fact, a formal witness to this case, and had offered to give a statement to prosecutors. Investigators say they are looking to see if they can establish any criminal money flows through NGOs or individuals.

According to the journalist, however, the raid group tricked her into opening the door by

pretending they were delivering a court summons. She said that the group removed a number of working documents, notebooks, several flash drives, a tablet computer, her children's old computers and her husband's phone.

Svetova was dismissive of suggestions she has any unlawful links with Khodorkovsky, who she says she has never met.

“I've always been open about my work with Open Russia. I'm a journalist, I receive a salary and I pay my taxes to the state as I'm supposed to,” she said. “This is an act of intimidation.”

It is not entirely clear who the final intended target of the raid was.

On the one hand, last year, prosecutors reopened criminal cases against YUKOS — an attempt, presumably, to increase pressure on the exiled Khodorkovsky. Other Open Russia employees have also been targeted in raids.

At the same time, Svetova says investigators seemed more interested in her role in a penal reform NGO and as a member of a civilian prison oversight committee than they were in her links to Khodorkovsky.

The full scope of the investigation — its aims and objectives — will probably remain unclear for many weeks. But Svetova has hinted at the worst possible scenarios.

“They seemed to be fishing around to pull a case together,” the journalist said. “I thought they were going to take me to prison there and then.” **TMT**

## READING THE KREMLIN

# It's Time to Make Nuclear Arms Control Great Again

By **Vladimir Frolov**  
Political analyst



An odd structural problem stands in the way of the Trump administration's proposed “reset” with Russia: nuclear arms control.

Few could have predicted this stumbling block. Every recent rapprochement between Moscow and Washington has begun with negotiated reductions in nuclear weapons, nuclear testing and missile defense. Managing the nuclear arms race has been the meat of the bilateral relationship. Beyond that, the two countries have little to talk about. This is still the case today.

For Russia, maintaining a robust treaty framework and an intensive engagement with the U.S. on strategic stability is also a matter of status projection. This is the only area where Russia and the U.S. are equals, underscoring Russia's otherwise underwhelming claims to a superpower status.

In their Jan. 28 phone call, Putin proposed negotiating a five-year extension of the New START treaty, signed by Presidents Obama and Medvedev in 2010 and due to expire in 2021.

This was supposed to be a no-brainer — easy and predictable. However, Trump called the treaty a “bad deal” for America that favored Russia, shocking Putin.

Donald Trump has been sending alarming signals to Moscow on the nuclear issue. After winning the election in November, he tweeted that the United States “must greatly strengthen and expand its nuclear capability until such time as the world comes to its senses regarding nukes.” When asked on MSNBC's “Morning Joe” what he meant, Trump doubled down: “Let it be an arms race. We will outmatch them at every pass and outlast them all.”

Moscow initially sought to downplay these statements. The Kremlin noted that the U.S. has the right to modernize its nuclear arsenal, as long as it stays within the treaty limits and does not seek a unilateral advantage. The U.S. nuclear triad has not been modernized since early 1980s, and, in 2010, Republicans in Congress pushed through a \$1 trillion program to replace almost all of the existing strategic weapons. This is not news to Moscow.

Unravelling the New START, however, would be a game changer. The treaty requires both nations to reduce their arsenals by February 2018 to 700 deployed strategic launchers and 1550 deployed warheads. This is a situation of parity with no side gaining an advantage if the limits continue to apply beyond 2021.

It is unclear why Trump thinks it's “a bad deal for America.” Perhaps he is channeling the alarmist concerns within Republican circles that Russia is now exceeding the warhead limit by 246 deployed warheads. In fact, this stems from an overlap in new systems coming online and old systems getting decommissioned. Russia will be decommissioning old SS-18 ICBMs and Delta-III submarines by February 2018. In the most recent bilateral count from September, Russia actually had 173 fewer launchers than the United States. This gives the U.S. a real advantage: warheads can be moved from storage, but launchers provide the real strategic structure and their numbers cannot be quickly increased. If Trump exits START this U.S. advantage will only grow, forcing Russia into an arms race to restore parity.

Moscow finds itself in a bind. It does not want nuclear arms control to dominate the agenda with Trump. It considers this to

be the crucial flaw of the Obama-Medvedev “reset,” when Russia was “cheated” into concessions on issues of interest to the U.S., while Moscow's priorities — NATO enlargement and Russia's “right” to a post-Soviet sphere of influence — were ignored. Moscow is intent on rectifying this with Trump by linking everything into a “grand bargain” where Russia's interests in Ukraine and European security would crowd out nuclear issues.

There is also little appetite in Russia these days for further nuclear reductions. Moscow considers a robust nuclear posture indispensable to Russia's security. Going lower than 1550 deployed strategic warheads, as Obama proposed in 2013, is too risky, the Kremlin believes.

The fact that Russia may have purposefully violated the INF Treaty by allegedly deploying a long range ground-launched cruise missile highlights Russia's lack of interest in strategic arms control and its focus on non-U.S. contingencies — i.e. China. These missiles cannot be used in any nuclear mission not already covered by the existing arsenal of nuclear sea-launched and air-launched missiles.

That said, Moscow has little choice but to try to constrain the unilateralist Trump administration with legally binding arms control agreements. This will require further cuts in strategic and even non-strategic weapons (a longstanding U.S. concern).

Russia isn't thrilled by that idea, but it could be convinced. Lifting U.S. sanctions on Russia in return for drastic nuclear cuts — an idea Trump has previously proposed — would make the deal palatable to the Kremlin. **TMT**



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**Editor-in-Chief** Mikhail Fishman  
**Advertising Director** Maria Kamenskaya  
m.kamenskaya@imedia.ru

**Director** Elena Stepanova  
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**Founder and publisher**  
OOO Moscovtimes

**Founder's, publisher's and editorial address**

3 Polkovaya Ul., Bldg. 1, Moscow 127018

**Editorial** +7 (495) 234 3223

Fax +7 (495) 232 6529

**Advertising Sales** +7 (495) 232 4774

Fax +7 (495) 232 1764

**Subscription** +7 (495) 232 9293

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"I need to do something to stop torture in prisons. I'm no better than other people who are being tortured," **Ildar Dadin**

4

Days between ruling and Dadin's release.

2.5 Years

Dadin's sentence for participating in unauthorized rallies in 2014-2015.



Only protesters who pose a real threat to other people's lives or property should be subject to criminal prosecution, the Constitutional Court ruled on Dadin's case.

# 'Somebody is Going to be Beaten'

By **Ola Cichowlas** o.cichowlas@imedia.ru

Torture is still widespread in Russian prisons, says released activist Ildar Dadin

For months, it wasn't clear that Ildar Dadin would make it out of prison alive. When his letter alleging torture in prison was published online, the jailed dissident became the face of extreme cruelty within the Russian penal system.

The fallout from that letter was swift. Within weeks, Dadin had been transferred from his Arctic prison to another cell deep in Siberia. But for over a month, he was lost in transit, completely incommunicado. Protests erupted outside the Justice Ministry in Moscow, demanding proof that Dadin was alive. Social media exploded with the hashtag #whereisildardadin.

In parallel, his lawyers pushed appeals in the Russian Constitutional Court, arguing that the original verdict impinged upon his right to protest. This ended with good news on Feb. 23, when, following a ruling to review the case, his sentence was overturned.

Dadin walked free five days later, fourteen months after his imprisonment under controversial new anti-protest legislation.

## "A Criminal System"

"I am not afraid of dying," read the letter that the activist somehow managed to smuggle out to his wife in November. "I'm more afraid of not being able to tolerate the torture."

Speaking in a phone interview with The Moscow Times a day after his release, Dadin expanded on his experience in the Karelia IK-7 prison colony.

Initially, he says, the prison authorities abused him verbally. Then, he was brought to the prison director's office, where he was hung by his wrists and threatened with rape. He was left hanging in his cell, he says, certain he would be raped.

Dadin went to see the prison nurse, but she concluded there were no signs of abuse on his body. "The problem is the sadists know how to beat [in a way that nobody notices]," he says.

Instead, the prison director beat him for appealing to the nurse and starting a hunger strike, Dadin alleges.



ALEXEI ZWEIFERT / AP

Ildar Dadin was sentenced to 2.5 years in prison for repeatedly carrying out one-man protests.

Dadin says he thought of suicide in Karelia — "when it seemed like the only way to end the suffering and the fear." His mind was changed when he found out about the level of public support for his cause.

"They had an information blockade on me, but soon enough I found out people cared," he says. "This is when I knew I would not die — from that moment, I knew I was safer than a lot of people outside jail."

## Steps to Release

Public pressure pushed authorities to transfer Dadin from Karelia to the more comfortable IK-5 prison colony in Altai.

"They sent me to a better prison so that I would stop talking about torture," Dadin says. The Siberian prison, he admits, was "a world away" from what he experienced in Karelia.

Dadin thought he would serve the rest of his sentence in Altai. When his lawyer informed him about the Constitutional Court's ruling, he initially did not believe it.

"I'm sure they released me because of pressure in Russia and

all over the world," Dadin told The Moscow Times. "It's the way Putin's authoritarian regime works."

The court ruled that the internationally condemned law should remain in place but, unexpectedly, said Dadin's verdict was imposed in violation of the law. Soon after, Russia's Supreme Court confirmed the ruling.

Within a matter of hours, his wife, fellow activist Anastasia Zotova, was on a flight to the southern Siberian prison colony, 3600 kilometers east of Moscow.

Upon her arrival, however, Zotova discovered that Dadin would not be freed immediately. She stood waiting outside the prison gates, in the freezing cold, for three days. Prison authorities told her they had not been formally informed of the decision to free Dadin and were waiting for official documents from Moscow.

Dadin himself was only told his wife and sister were waiting for him outside the prison gates a few hours before his release.

"I thought it would all be over, but I was not completely sure," he says.

Finally, on the fourth day waiting, the activist was released.

## A Return to Activism

Before Dadin's release, Zotova hinted that the couple may leave Russia once her husband was out of prison. Now, Dadin says there is no way to leave his native country.

He plans to take up to six months to recover from his year in remote Russian prisons, but will return "as soon as he can" to campaign against torture in the country.

The activist says he is sure that the torture he experienced in Karelia is happening all across Russia.

"I know that while I'm recuperating, somebody's arm is going to be broken, somebody is going to be beaten," he says.

"My first thought was to emigrate but my conscience tells me I can't leave as long as that is happening." **TMT**



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“The Soviet leadership was more interested in propaganda measures themselves rather than result” — Psychological Warfare textbook

**Feb. 22**

Defense Minister announces new info forces



According to a GRU textbook, there are three types of propaganda: white, gray and black. The latter is the most insidious, a kind of information false flag operation.

**BYC 093501**

Russian military code for a psychological warfare and propaganda officer



# We'll Occupy Your Mind

By [Matthew Bodner](#) and [Alexey Kovalev](#) newsreporter@imedia.ru | Illustration by [Bojemoi Art](#)

A reprint of an intelligence textbook on psychological warfare gives insights into new propaganda troops

“Psychological warfare has existed as long as mankind.” So begins a book purported to be an unauthorized reprint of the Russian military intelligence service’s (GRU) textbook on psychological warfare. The book was published in Minsk in 1999. Since then, it has become the basis of courses on psychological warfare for reserve officer training (ROTC) cadets at Moscow State University’s (MGU) journalism faculty, former students say.

“In the past, people were able to influence each other only through direct contact,” the textbook reads. “Today, the means of influencing the human mind have become much more sophisticated, thanks to the accumulated knowledge of thousands of years, IT, communication, and management.”

While the purported GRU textbook was ahead of its time, several graduates of the MGU classes described lessons as archaic. The scale of the information space has grown since 1999, and control over it has become more critical to modern war. And now, Russia appears to be upgrading its efforts to dominate the information front.

On Feb. 22, the eve of Russia’s annual Defenders of the Fatherland holiday, Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu announced the creation of a new “information operations force.” The announcement came just hours after the Foreign Ministry unveiled a new project to expose “fake news” published about Russia abroad.

“Propaganda needs to be smart, competent and effective,” Shoigu said, justifying the creation of information troops.

Shoigu’s comments on new information operations were vague, leaving it unclear exactly what the propaganda troops would do or who they would report to. Analysts say they are likely to be part of the cyber forces — a military branch announced in 2013, but that Russia has since denied exists.

“They seem to be cyber troops [hackers], not information war troops [propagandists],” says Michael Kofman, a Russia security analyst at the Virginia-based CNA think tank. “The Russian military already has psychological operations units, but they are all useless. It’s the GRU that does all the real information war.”

Others suggest that the force will do both hacking and propaganda. Russia’s understanding of what constitutes information war is much broader than the West’s, says Mark Galeotti, analyst at the Institute of International Relations Prague. For Moscow, “information operations” include everything from propaganda and disinformation to psychological and cyber warfare.

## New Dog, Old Tricks

Vladimir Shamanov, the head of the State Duma’s defense committee, offered some insight into how the Russians see the new

military force. It will be tasked with, among other things, countering information operations conducted by enemy states. “Information conflict is part of general conflict,” he said.

Despite flashy repackaging, the militarization of information is not new in Russia. Psychological warfare has been a staple of Russian ROTC programs since the Cold War. It is also taught as a military science in the journalism faculties of major educational institutions such as Moscow State University.

“My rank after graduating [from the course] in 2001 was lieutenant and I was a deputy division chief of staff for intelligence,” says one former officer, Dmitry, on condition of anonymity. “It guaranteed I wouldn’t be drafted into the regular forces and sent to Chechnya. But in the case of a full-scale war [with NATO], I was to oversee psyops against their troops and civilians.”

Dmitry says that he and his fellow cadets were trained explicitly for a major conventional land war with NATO.

The purported GRU textbook even advises different approaches to waging psychological warfare on different NATO members. So, the Germans have an “abstract-logical” way of thinking, but prefer clearly reasoned facts and calculations.” Whereas the French and Americans love visuals.

## Three Information Weapons

Studying the moves of enemy societies is meant to help cadets tailor their approach to psychological warfare if called into action. Broadly speaking, the courses teach three types of weaponized information.

The first category is white propaganda — the most common and easily identifiable type. This is information designed to demoralize enemy combatants.

Alexander Mityaev, a 2003 ROTC graduate, gave an example of how Russians would taunt American soldiers:

“There was an old colonel who taught us how to cut the Yanks’ supply lines to starve them of their Camel cigarettes and Coca-Cola, and then shower them with leaflets mocking their inability to survive without Camels and Coke.”

Leaflets were to be distributed with what is called an agitsnaryad, a play on the Russian words for “political agitation” and “artillery shell.” These non-explosive shells would be stuffed with leaflets and fired by a howitzer beyond enemy lines. “There was a science to it: how to prevent leaflets from sticking together inside the shell, and so on,” said Mityaev, now a lieutenant in Russia’s reserve forces.

Then there is gray propaganda, defined as information that has no obvious source. Usually it involves coaxing the

enemy into believing one thing by discrediting another.

But the most insidious form of information warfare, according to the GRU textbook the courses are based on, is black propaganda, a false flag operation.

Dmitry recalls a specific black propaganda techniques taught in his textbook. During the Chechen conflict, Russian psychological warfare experts spread rumors that foreign fighters had raped the 13-year-old daughter of a Chechen village elder. The rumors helped sow discord between Chechen fighters and Arab Islamist volunteers, undermining rebel unity.

“There was a spirit of moral ambivalence to all this,” Dmitry says. “We knew what we were doing was wrong, but the ultimate truth was on our side, so it was something we just had to do.”

Neither of the psychological warfare soldiers could explain why a new information operations force was necessary. After all, they argued, the military already has the means to do what it wants, and existing Russian propaganda outlets and troll factories do the disinformation job just fine.

“Maybe Shoigu just wants another plaything,” Dmitry says. **TMT**


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"Male politicians and their brutal stance failed the world. They allowed for wars, conflicts and violence." **Valentina Matviyenko**

**>76yrs**

Average life expectancy for women in Russia.

**1981**

Russia ratifies Convention on Elimination of Discrimination against Women.



Forty percent of men in Russia don't consider gender equality an important issue, according to the independent pollster Levada Center.

# Twenty Russian Women Who Matter

By [The Moscow Times](#) newsreporter@imedia.ru

Sexism remains one of Russia's social realities. But these women are making laws, fighting injustice, defining policies, and turning industries upside down - some for better, others for worse



**1**

## Finance

### Elvira Nabiullina

At 53, Elvira Nabiullina is known as Russia's crisis manager. But the former Minister of Economic Development is also the first woman to head a Central Bank in any G8 country.

Amid Russia's deepening economic crisis in Sept. 2015, Euromoney magazine named Nabiullina the best head of a central bank in Europe. The award came just 10 months after Russia's "black Tuesday," when the ruble dropped 41 percent against the dollar.

By raising the key interest rate, strengthening the ruble, and giving financial institutions access to additional liquidity, Nabiullina fought a "macroeconomic storm" by implementing "moderate policy."

"She is respected internationally for ensuring Russian financial stability against a difficult backdrop of lower oil prices and sanctions," economist Timothy Ash told *The Moscow Times*.

## Politics

### Irina Yarovaya

Yarovaya, 50, is arguably Russia's most infamous politician. She has made a name for herself by championing some of the country's most repressive laws. Her legislative achievements include a bill outcasting NGOs as "foreign agents" for receiving foreign funding, and equally controversial "anti-terrorist" legislation that outlines large-scale surveillance and harsher punishments for terrorism related crimes.



**4**

## Sports

### Yulia Stepanova

Few women can claim to have had as much impact as Stepanova, 30. By exposing Russia's mass state-sponsored doping program, the Olympic runner's actions led to the entire Russian athletics team being banned from the 2016 Olympics in Brazil. Stepanova, who admitted to using performance-enhancing drugs herself, said her marriage to an anti-doping official encouraged her to campaign against doping.

The evidence the runner provided formed part of the first 2015 World Anti-Doping Agency report, which led to more than 4,000 Russian track and field athletes being excluded from international competition.

Stepanova, her husband and their 8-month-old child fled to Canada, where they applied for political asylum. Russian authorities responded by characterizing the athlete's allegations as a lie invented to get asylum in Canada.

Stepanova reportedly lives and trains in the U.S. In December 2016, she was allowed to compete under the neutral flag.



**2**

## Business

### Tatyana Bakalchuk

Tatyana Bakalchuk, 41, founder of the online clothing store Wildberries, keeps a low profile. But her \$380 million fortune speaks for itself. The business started in 2004 when, she decided to start reselling clothes bought in Germany. Initially, she run the business out of her family's Moscow apartment. Within a decade, she had turned it into Russia's biggest online clothing shop with 2.5 million clients.



**3**

## Politics

### Olga Golodets

The only woman among nine deputy prime ministers, Olga Golodets, 54, is in charge of Russia's healthcare, education, and social sector. According to the *Kommersant* newspaper, colleagues describe her as a "ruthless, strong leader...capable of managing pretty much anything."

Unlike other career politicians, Golodets comes from the business sector, having worked in management in various companies belonging to oligarch Mikhail Prokhorov. Her career as a state official began in Moscow city government in 2010, where mayor Sergei Sobyenin was first appointed as his deputy for healthcare and education. Golodets was one of the richest women in Sobyenin's team, according to the income statements published in 2011. Her total income in 2010 amounted to 57 million roubles (\$977,000 dollars).



**5**



*"Modern women are capable of doing everything: careers, creative work, activism, family, bringing up children" - Vladimir Putin*

>65 Mln

women living in Russia, 10 million more than men.



"A woman can stop a horse in mid-leap, and isn't afraid to enter a burning hut." — Russian proverb

1965

March 8 named International Women's Day in USSR.



6

**Civil Society**

**Svetlana Gannushkina**

Veteran migrant rights activist, Svetlana Gannushkina, 74, was reported to have been nominated for the Nobel peace prize in 2016.

She said not getting it in the end was a relief: "I dreaded the thought. I wouldn't have been able to keep up with the flow of people they'd have sent my way."

In the absence of proper institutional support, Gannushkina's Civic Assistance Committee NGO is the first line of assistance to refugees and migrants in Russia. In 2015 alone, the Committee helped 2,276 people; in many cases, Gannushkina was personally involved in resolving problems.

Gannushkina's NGO was declared a foreign agent in 2015.

SERGEI MELIKHOV

**Culture**

**Zelfira Tregulova**

The name of Zelfira Tregulova, 61-year-old fine arts expert, is now forever linked to the rebirth of the Tretyakov Gallery. Moscow's flagship fine arts museum had, until recently, failed to attract as many visitors as its counterparts, the Pushkin Museum and the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg.

Appointed director of the gallery in 2015, Tregulova made it her mission to get the glory back to the world's largest museum of Russian art. She committed to rehabilitating Soviet art — both official and unofficial.

Surprisingly, she succeeded. The Tretyakov exhibitions that are organized under her supervision now attract hundreds of thousands of people. Many of the visitors are willing to stand in line for hours.



7

SERGEI MELIKHOV



8

**Politics**

**Valentina Matviyenko**

Valentina Matviyenko, 67, is the third most important state official in Russia. In the event of the president and prime minister being incapacitated, she would, in theory, take power. Matviyenko has presided over the Federation Council since 2011, the country's upper chamber of parliament, and is the only woman on Russia's 13-strong Security Council.

Her political career goes way back to the Soviet times, when she made her way up the ladder in the Leningrad branch of the Communist Party. In the 1990s, she worked in the Foreign Ministry, then in the presidential administration. In 2003, Matviyenko was elected governor of St. Petersburg and stayed in office until 2011.

ANTON NOVOBUREZHIN / TASS



9

**Sport**

**Katerina Tikhonova**

Katerina Tikhonova, is one of Russia's most famous rock 'n' roll dancers and Vice-President for Expansion and Marketing of the World Rock 'n' Roll Confederation. Tikhonova is also reported to have a seat at the Russian Federation of Acrobatic Rock 'n' Roll, and to run several science foundations affiliated with the Moscow State University, Russia's most prominent higher education institution. Remarkable achievements for her 30 years.

Also, she may — or may not — be Russian President Vladimir Putin's daughter. Despite the widespread media attention paid to this rumour, Vladimir Putin has neither confirmed nor denied it.

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**Politics**

**Maria Zakharova**

Maria Zakharova, the 41-year-old spokesperson of Russia's Foreign Ministry, needs little introduction in media circles. She makes headlines almost as often as her actual boss, the seasoned minister Sergei Lavrov. A maestro in the guerilla use of social media, Zakharova's brash and belligerent Facebook statements are often picked up as separate news stories by state-run news agencies, such as TASS and RIA Novosti. With subscribers to her Facebook page topping 300,000 people, she is undoubtedly one of the celebrities of Russian politics.

She is known to pick a fight with journalists, and took things to a new level in February with a campaign to out "fake" foreign news on Russia.



10

MIKHAIL METZEL / TASS



**Politics**

**Yelena Mizulina**

Firebrand of Russia's ultraconservatism, Mizulina drafted and successfully lobbied the infamous 2012 "gay propaganda" law. Decriminalizing domestic violence is Mizulina's most recent win.



**Entertainment**

**Chulpan Khamatova**

Prominent actress and philanthropist, Khamatova runs Russia's biggest NGO, helping children with cancer. Khamatova caused a stir in 2012 by appearing in a pro-Putin video.



**Charity**

**Nyuta Federemesser**

Founder of the Vera hospice foundation, guardian angel of Russia's terminally ill. When it comes to palliative care issues and pain relief, Federemesser is the one authorities listen to.



**Media**

**Margarita Simonyan**

Over the course of a decade, Simonyan has made a truly stellar career: from junior TV reporter to editor-in-chief of not just one, but two of Russia's most important outlets. She heads RT's TV channel and the Rossiya Segodnya news agency.



**Media**

**Nataliya Sindeyeva**

Sindeyeva founded Russia's only opposition-leaning TV channel, Dozhd, and has been running it ever since. At one point Dozhd almost shut down, teetering on the brink of bankruptcy but, through wit and luck, it survived.



**Charity**

**Yelizaveta Glinka**

Also known as Doctor Liza, aid worker Glinka fed and treated the homeless in Moscow and rescued injured children from war-torn Eastern Ukraine. She died in a plane crash in December 2016.



**Sport**

**Maria Sharapova**

Russia's most successful tennis player admitted to taking meldonium, a banned substance, in 2016. Her main sponsors subsequently cut contracts, but she survived the scandal.



**Politics**

**Nataliya Poklonskaya**

Poklonskaya is famous for her good looks and role in Russia's annexation of Crimea. Russia's youngest female general, and now a fierce State Duma deputy. She is the subject of many anime cartoons.



**Women's Rights**

**Nadezhda Tolokonnikova**

The most prominent member of the Pussy Riot collective. She spent 22 months in prison for her role in a provocative stunt in Moscow's Cathedral of Christ the Saviour.



**Business**

**Natalya Kasperskaya**

One of the wealthiest women in Russia and one of the most famous IT entrepreneurs in the country. Together with her first husband, Yevgeny Kaspersky, she founded the renowned Kaspersky Lab cyber-security company.

1. TASS; 2. TASS; 3. FACEBOOK; 4. SERGEI AVDUJEVSKIY / TASS; 5. TASS; 6. KREMLIN PRESS SERVICE; 7. EVAN AGOSTINI / AP; 8. ALEXANDER SHALGIN / TASS; 9. AP; 10. VLADIMIR ASTAPKOVICH / TASS



"If you want to speak out against the authorities, you'll lose the concert venues belonging to the mayor." — rap journalist **Serob Khachatryan**

**1984**

Chas Pik releases "Rap," Russia's first rap album.

**\$3.2 million**

Timati's 2016 income, according to Forbes.



St. Petersburg is the undeniable capital of Russian rap battles, where the Versus and #SLOVOSPB platforms are centered.

# Gangsta's Paradise

By **Matthew Kupfer** and **Bradley Jardine** newsreporter@imedia.ru | Illustration by **Valentin Tkach**

How Russia has adopted and adapted a quintessentially American musical genre



**A**lexei Ponomaryov doesn't look like a rapper. Dressed in a red plaid, button-down shirt and khaki pants, he speaks softly, grinning awkwardly from time to time.

It's a far cry from the aggressive image portrayed in his music.

"I'm a national traitor/I'm the fifth column/My Russia's far from yours/You jail people, start wars/But we have soldiers too/A huge army to our rescue," Joker James —

Ponomaryov's stage name — roars in "Nothing Funny."



Alexei Ponomaryov

As an artist popular mostly among Moscow's liberal youth, Ponomaryov avoids the clichés associated with Russian rap's mainstream — fast cars, beautiful women, and blingy lifestyles. But his story reflects both the growing popularity of Russian rap, and its power to address the realities of everyday life.

Ponomaryov is no stranger to the music business, after ten years performing alternative rock. But last year he decided that rap was a better medium to express his thoughts on Russian politics and society.

"Rap is street culture," he says. "It's better protest music."

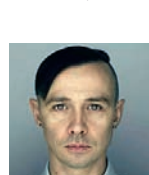
## Straight Outta da Soviet Union

Rap arrived in Soviet Russia nearly ten years after it appeared in America. Critics often date its emergence to the release of "Rap," a 1984 album by the group Chas Pik. By today's standards, "Rap" is an oddity — a weird mixture of Russian and English-language rapping influenced by Grandmaster Flash and interspersed with retro-tinged rock songs. Then, it was ahead of its time.

By the start of the 1990s, groups like Bad Balance and Malchishnik, as well as individual performers Lika Star and Delfin, began to popularize rap. Soon, the genre was blaring from radios and MCs were appearing on television.

Early rap was hardly political. It took on subjects that were considered taboo under the Soviets.

"Rap was interesting to Russians because it openly sang about sex, drugs, and conflict with the police," says music critic Artemy Troitsky, who chaired the jury of the first



Delfin

Russian rap festival, held in Moscow's Gorky Park in 1990.

He cites rap trio Malchishnik's 1991 hit "Nonstop Sex" as an example of the genre's scandalous, but innovative art. In a song clearly imitating the Beastie Boys,

the three performers — Delfin, Matubor, and Den — graphically describe having sex with a girl, one after the other.

The nearly pornographic song, which grew wildly popular, was "a big step forward for the culture of sexual revolution," Troitsky says.

## Moscow Bling

If rap was once the cutting edge of Russian music, today it is an undeniable part of the mainstream. Rap has its own stars and hits. It has even received official recognition.

In 2009, Russian President Vladimir Putin, then prime minister, appeared on the rap television show "Battle for Respect" to praise the music, which he termed an "art form." He hailed rap for its "social content" and for "speaking about the problems of youth."



Timati

Rap has occasionally returned that praise. Timati, the stage name of Timur Yunusov, is perhaps the biggest star of mainstream Russian rap. He is also one of the president's biggest fans.

In 2015, to commemorate the president's 63rd birthday, he and rapper Sasha Chest released a special music video. Swaggering across a smoke-filled red square, Timati raps

the line, "My best friend is President Putin."

However, most of Timati's work — like the majority of Russian rap — is more concerned with entertainment than it is with politics.

In the music video for his song "Bak-lazhan" ("Eggplant"), Timati cruises the Moscow streets in a purple Lada sedan. When he spots a pretty girl, he sings, "Oh what an ass, what tits! Give me your number quick!"

Interestingly, in the video, Timati depicts himself as a gold-toothed migrant from Central Asia or the North Caucasus — racial groups derogatorily referred to as "blacks" in Russian. The performer is, in fact, of Jewish and Tatar ancestry.

Other Russian rap groups reinterpret American "gangsta" culture. "Krovostok" (Bloodstream) raps about drug abuse and violence. Their song "Dumbbell" tells the story of a hoodlum on a killing spree using exercise equipment to mutilate his victims. Like much of their work, it's considered intellectual satire.

Young rappers like Pharaoh have a different vibe. Although popular among teenagers, his nihilistic songs are basic in the lyrics department. In the music video for the 2015 hit "Black Siemens," Pharaoh and his friends dance limply around a car while chanting a string of nearly unrelated words.

"Skrt-skrt, skrt-skrt (in dead Nikes!)/ Skrt-





Hip hop artist Dino MC47 “rapped the news” for RIA Novosti for almost three years. The agency wanted to attract a younger audience and encourage political engagement.

## 1990

First Russian rap festival held in Moscow’s Gorky Park.



“If you are a musician in Russia, 95% of your income is concert fees. No gigs, no money.” — rapper **Noize MC**

## 31 million

Approximate number of views of Oxxxymiron vs. JohnnyBoy rap battle video on Youtube.

skrt, skrt-skrt (in a white shirt),” he sings. Fans are still debating the exact meaning of these words online.

Music critics scoff at popular artists like Pharaoh. But for many of Russia’s youth, they represent the contours of the country’s rapidly changing musical landscape.

### Hip Hop for Respect

“I’ll make a meal out of you!” a young man shouts at another as an excited crowd looks on. “You are about to become fertilizer / You’re here not for victory / But for my approval!”



Oxxxymiron

This is a rap battle between Russia’s Oxxxymiron and JohnnyBoy of Riga, Latvia. Filmed in St. Petersburg as part of the Versus rap battle series, the video has clocked in over 31 million views on YouTube. The insult slinging may seem crude, but these

battles are giving rap its edge back.

It is difficult to explain the run-away success of rap battles, but many cite the aggression as part of the appeal.

“Everyone likes confrontation,” says rapper Den Cheney, a 24-year-old organizer of the #SLOVOSPB rap battle series in St. Petersburg. “Together with rap, it’s the ideal recipe for a good show.”

At their best, rap battles involve humor, creative insults, and fast rhymes. In Russian practice, Cheney admits there are a few repeated themes: “Usually your opponent’s sexual orientation, or sexual contact with their close relatives.”

Still, the average battle video gets upward of 2 million views, which can help propel young performers to stardom.

Miron “Oxxxymiron” Fyodorov is the perfect example of this. Born in St. Petersburg, the rapper grew up in Germany and studied at Oxford — hardly a stereotypical hip hop pedigree. But his performances in battle have helped make him Russian rap’s biggest rising talent. And keeping that reputation takes work. Oxxxymiron is currently preparing for an upcoming battle with Vyacheslav “MC Gnoiny” Karelin.

“The expectations are overheated,” says Serob Khachatryan, a Russian journalist who has extensively covered the music. “It’s the most discussed topic in Russian rap.”

On occasion, the rap battles flirt with controversy. In a July 2016 battle with Karelin for the Versus series, Dmitry “Ernesto Zatknites”

### Dress Like a Russian Rapper

Some of Russian rap’s aesthetic is borrowed from America. Other parts are uniquely Russian. The Moscow Times outlines a few of the key features of the hip-hop look.



**Cap**—Whether baseball or flat, a cap tops off the rapper look. Belarusian rapper Seryoga even dedicated a song to his Kangol 504 cap.



**Shaved head** — Rappers like Timati and Oxxxymiron make close crops — whether buzzed or shaved bald — a central part of their look. If a buzz is too extreme for you, try a fade on the sides.



**Tattoos**—Not all rappers have them, but performers like Timati, Krovostok, Skriptonit, and others are known for arms covered in ink.



**Sneakers**—Both comfortable and fashionable, sneakers are so integral to the rap look that sneaker collectors serve on rap battle juries.



**Track pants**—Formerly the default leg-wear of young men from Moscow’s poor suburbs, track pants have undergone a fashion revival thanks to designer Gosha Rubchinsky.



**Hoodie sweater**—Whether for fashion or out of sheer practicality, hoodie sweaters are popular upper body wear in Russian rap. It gets cold in Russia!

Romashchenko rapped, “even the [Russian Orthodox] Patriarch was once a sperm,” provoking a hostile response from the audience.

Later in the battle, Groiny told Ernesto, “Your so-called friends are just as non-existent as the Ukrainian nation.” Both lines were censored in the online video of the battle.

### Protest Anthems

In August 2014, under the west Ukrainian night sky, festival-goers cheered and waved glow sticks in the air. Noize MC, Russia’s most controversial rapper, had taken to the stage to sing “Tantsi,” a dubstep-inflected song mixing the Ukrainian and Russian languages. In the ecstasy of the moment, he reached down into the crowd to grab a Ukrainian flag from a fan, wrapping it around his waist and dancing.



Noize MC

During the war in eastern Ukraine, “that was enough to become a ‘traitor of Russia,’ an ‘accomplice to fascism,’ and ‘sellout political whore’ overnight,” the artist, known as Ivan Alexeyev off stage, told the Moscow Times in an email exchange.

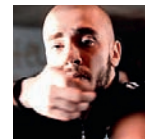
Alexeyev is no stranger to controversy. In 2010 he became a household name with the release of “Mercedes S666,” a song criticizing the

Russian justice system’s failure to punish a Lukoil executive, after his alleged reckless driving led to a car crash that killed two women.

The star insists he isn’t political — “just an artist who cares what goes on in society.” But Noize MC’s 2014 performance in Lviv proved to be a step too far for the Kremlin. Over half of his shows were immediately cancelled in Russia. At other shows, he faced crude intimidation tactics.

“You play 5 songs and then a guy in a mask with an AK-47 climbs on stage and stops the show,” Alexeyev says. The border between acceptable and unacceptable performances “depends entirely on the mood of those Lubyanka guys,” he adds, referring to the security services.

Other emerging artists are playing this balance carefully. Khaski, one of the most critically acclaimed young artists, released



Khaski

a song on Putin’s birthday in 2011 describing how “the king and his entourage feast, while the people are poor.” Later, he socialized with nationalist writer Zakhar Prilepin and even travelled to separatist-controlled

Ukraine with him. But the performer’s most recent songs lack overt political statements.

As he works on his first full-length album, Alexei Ponomarev, who referred to himself as a “national traitor” and the “fifth column” in an earlier song, says he isn’t particularly worried about running afoul of the authorities.

His music may comment on politics, but its primary purpose is artistic.

“My goal isn’t to bring people out into the street,” he says. **TMT**

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## THE WORD'S WORTH

## Beware the Furies of March

Гадюка: viper



By **Michele A. Berdy**  
Moscow-based translator and interpreter, author of "The Russian Word's Worth" (Glas), a collection of her columns.

In the trough of calm between February 23 — День защитника Отечества (Defender of the Homeland Day, aka Men's Day) — and March 8 — Международный Женский День (International Women's Day, aka Spend-All-Your-Salary-On-Flowers Day), it's a good idea to bone up on complimentary phrases for the ladies. This isn't hard. Pick an adjective — like добрая (kind) — prefix it with an intensifier — самая (the most) — and you're golden.

But what about the women in your life who are not kind, pretty, brilliant, warm, and loving? What do you call them? No problem! Russian's got you covered.

Let's devote ourselves to a couple of zingers, beginning on a high note with a word from Greek antiquity which, thanks to that fine Russian educational system over the centuries, is still in use today: мегера. In Russian this is a lowercase noun, in English it's the uppercase name Megaera, one of the three Furies of Greek mythology.

I first noticed this word in regard to a certain presidential candidate: Люди рассказывали, какая она злая мегера ("People told me what a nasty shrew she was.") But the word can just as easily apply to those mean, obstructive women at the bottom of the employment ladder: Выписать квитанцию мегера-кассирша с воплями отказывается ("The Gorgon on the cash register shrieks that she won't write me a receipt.")

But that's not all. Pity this poor guy: Почти бывшую жену он считал стервой, тещу — мегерой. ("He called his soon-to-be ex-wife a nasty piece of work and his mother-in-law a shrew.") I guess he never learned the old expression: яблоко от яблони недалеко падает ("the apple doesn't fall far from the tree"). Or maybe he just brings out the worst in them.

In any case, a стерва is a mean-spirited woman, a tough broad, a backbiter. Woe to her co-workers: Она оказалась настоящей стервой. Доложила начальнику о шашнях его жены с шофером ("She turned out to be a real bitch. She told her boss that his wife was fooling around with the driver.")

One writer considers it an exclusively female thing: Слово "стерва" — это годится только для женщины, мужчин-стерв не бывает ("This word only applies to women — there aren't any male bitches.") Some people might disagree, but in any case, the word does have a masculine form, стервец, which is used to describe nasty men: Пока я сидел дома и болел, этот стервец писал мне беспрерывно о том, как ему хорошо жилось с девушками ("When I was stuck at home sick, that bastard wrote me constantly about the great time he was having with the girls.")

Someone else insists that стерва "чисто русская характеристика женщины, её не перевести, не объяснить" ("it's a purely Russian characteristic of women; you can't translate or explain it"). But here's the opposite point of view: Западные романы нравились больше, там мне нравились стервы, красивые стервы, из-за которых мужчины стрелялись ("I liked Western novels better — I liked those nasty women, those beautiful bitches men fought duels over.")

And let's finish with three female creeper crawlers: гадина (reptile), гадюка and гадючка (viper). You don't want to work with them, either: Мороженое стоило пятнадцать рублей, а наша бухгалтерша выписала мне всего двадцать пять суточных, гадюка ("Ice cream cost 15 rubles, but that snake of an accountant gave me a per diem of just 25 rubles.")

But no matter how awful they are, you still have to buy them all flowers next week. Вот стервы! **TMT**

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## MY MOSCOW

## Vodka, Caviar and Aperol Spritz

By **Andrei Muchnik** artsreporter@imedia.ru

## Down under in Moscow with chef Sebbie Kenyon



For Sebbie Kenyon, food and drink are at the heart of his life in Moscow.

Born into a family of restaurateurs in Australia, Sebbie Kenyon never wanted to be a chef. Instead, he believed rugby glory was in his future. But after a couple of unfortunate injuries ended his sports career, he fell in love with the culinary arts.

Following a stint in Paris at Gregory Marchand's acclaimed restaurant, Frenchie, Kenyon came to Moscow to help out fellow Australian chef Glen Ballis with the restaurant Lesartists. He soon started working for Alexander Rappaport, who was just opening his first Voronezh restaurant. Kenyon was the one who came up with the recipe for Voronezh's famous pastrami sandwich.

Today, Kenyon works at the 354 restaurant in the OKO skyscraper in Moskva-City, which has the highest terrace in Europe. But he has also taken on the role of chef at a new restaurant called Steak it Easy, at the Afimall shopping center. Soon to become a chain, Steak it Easy serves affordable steaks and burgers and doubles as a wine bar.

But it's not easy to be in the restaurant business in Moscow, says Kenyon.

"Russian customers are difficult, they only give you one chance. If the food's not good, they don't come back," he says. "So I have to make sure everything's perfect all the time."

Thankfully, Kenyon loves Moscow — both as a chef and as a resident. For sourcing fresh produce, he says there's no better place than the Dorogomilovsky Market. He even takes all his visiting chef friends there.

"I like to buy with my eyes rather than just buy in bulk. [Dorogomilovsky] has got a huge range of fruit and veg," he says.

Even when Kenyon isn't working, food dominates his life. On his one day off each week, he likes to go out for Georgian food,

watch cooking shows on TV, read about food and work on new dishes.

"I even dream about food!" he says. "Sometimes I try to cook what I dreamed about, but it doesn't always turn out so well."

Currently, Kenyon lives in central Moscow near the Kropotkinskaya metro station, and enjoys the area's location and the diversity of its sights — "there's Old Arbat, New Arbat, there's the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. You can go over the bridge to the Red October island and then it's just a short walk to Gorky Park. I'm not moving anywhere else!"

Kenyon also likes to spend his time around Patriarch's Ponds. "The old buildings there remind me of France!" he says. There are also great restaurants within walking distance: Uilliam's, Cutfish, Pinch, Saxon+Parole, and even Ugolek.

So where does this man of the kitchen go to relax? "I do love my chacha [Georgian grappa], I do love my vodka and I do love my caviar," he says. "I go to Dr. Zhivago for caviar and vodka, but it's usually at like 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning."

Kenyon loves Moscow's bar scene, especially cocktail bars like Delicatessen, Mendeleev and Motel. However, his favorite bartenders work at 15 Kitchen+Bar, where he loves their Old Fashioned with rum and says he's "super addicted to their Aperol Spritz."

"At 15 Kitchen, they've got my taste down perfectly," he says. "I've been drinking there for the past two years nearly every weekend."

He also can't get enough of the city's terraces — especially Bar Strelka in the summer.

"You can just sit there, watching the water go by with an Aperol Spritz in hand and beautiful Russian women all around," he says. "That's what I call an easy Sunday." **TMT**

# Out & About



Weekly round-up of all that's new, delicious and fun in Moscow.



ALEX KUROV / MUSEUM OF MOSCOW

← Many items produced during the Thaw were inspired by the scientific achievements of the USSR.

→ The exhibitions analyze the social and cultural significance of the post-Stalin years.



EVGENY ALEKSEEV / STATE TRETYAKOV GALLERY

## The Thaw: Anatomy of a Cultural Awakening

By [Alastair Gill](mailto:a.gill@imedia.ru) a.gill@imedia.ru

What is the Thaw? People often can't explain what it is. Everyone says there was a special atmosphere in the air, a kind of sincerity, a distinct spirit...

As Anastasia Kurlyandtseva, one of the curators of the "Thaw" exhibition at the New Tretyakov Gallery points out, the era, which began as Khrushchev took over from Stalin in the mid-1950s, continues to defy classification even now. It ended with Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968, ushering in a new era of censorship and tight state control.

The exhibit is part of a kaleidoscopic triple project under the title "The Thaw: Facing the Future," which sees the Tretyakov, the Museum of Moscow, and (later in March) the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts joining forces to explore the historical, social and cultural significance of the period.

The two current exhibitions aim to address the lasting ambiguity surrounding the Thaw ("Ottepel" in Russian) by providing an overview of the transformations that took place in Soviet society after Stalin's death. In this era, a genuine cultural shift was underway as the paranoid state structures of the USSR began to loosen.

For decades, historians have defined the Thaw largely by isolated events: the stunning victory by American pianist Van Cliburn at the inaugural International Tchaikovsky Piano Competition in 1958, the American National Exhibition at Sokolniki Park in 1959, and the publication of Solzhenitsyn's "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich" in 1962.

Yet, the Thaw continues to provide more questions than answers: Was it a state orchestrated change of direction aimed at harnessing the pent-up creative energies of a frustrated society? Or was it a gradual collective awakening, an organic social impulse?

One of the enduring problems with defining the Thaw, says Kurlyandtseva, is that the average Russian visitor "knows what

the British 1960s are about — the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, Twiggy. But concerning what happened during the Soviet 60s, there's a very fragmented global picture, which doesn't put the pieces of the puzzle together."

Whereas previous attempts to understand the period have focused on its visual art or its literature, the curators of the respective "Thaw" exhibitions realized that a more holistic approach was required — one that didn't neglect the developments in the sciences and the social sphere that accompanied the artistic and literary milestones of the Thaw.

"This is an exhibition about the Thaw as a project," says Yevgenia Kikodze, curator of the 'Moscow Thaw' exhibit across the river at the Museum of Moscow, which has been open since December. Kikodze sees the period as an opportunity for Soviet society that was only partially taken. "What is the Thaw but a kind of chance?"

"It was an attempt to [explore] a historical turning point, when it was possible to follow either one road or another, and we wanted to return to that place where that fork in the road did not yet exist," she says.

While naturally there is a substantial overlap between the two exhibitions, with works by artists of the time such as Yuri Pimenov and Mikhail Roginsky displayed in both shows, the museums attempt to reach an understanding of the period in different ways.

At the Tretyakov, the exhibition is divided into seven distinct thematic sections with names like "A Conversation with Father," "The Best City on Earth," and "International Relations," grouped around a circular central area that represents Moscow's Ploshchad Mayakovskogo (now Triumphalnaya).

"This is one of the cult places where various events took place... it's a place where people could socialize in those years, where

they came to listen to poets give readings, where they came to talk," says Kurlyandtseva.

In fact, the whole exhibition takes the form of a "city," with the display boards built to resemble the prefabricated panel housing that sprang up in the suburbs as a response to the housing crisis of the post-war years.

"A Conversation with Father" establishes a stark but vital counterpoint to the optimism of the rest of the exhibition: the revelations about the abuses of the Stalinist period and the Gulag that began to emerge in the mid-1950s.

The other sections feature sculptures, paintings, photographs and fragments of films made during the period, along with household items such as dinner services, vacuum cleaners, radio sets, the designs for many of which were clearly inspired by the country's achievements in space. There is an almost festive atmosphere on show here, from the documentary footage of the Moscow International Festival of Youth and Students in 1957, to the celebrations of Soviet achievements in space and the tachist canvases of Anatoly Zverev, inspired by Jackson Pollock.

But where the Tretyakov show arranges its exhibits into clearly defined cultural categories around a central forum, the Museum of Moscow delves deeper, asking the viewer to analyze the period through a more abstract prism. As Kikodze explains, the overarching theme is that of the "matrix," representing the era's universality, interconnectedness and lack of dominant cultural figures.

Here the exhibits — a vast range of artworks, household items and other paraphernalia — are split into nine zones under symbolic concepts such as "Matrix," "Capsule," "Rhythm," "Transparency," and "Absence."

Often similar material appears in sections that appear to be mutually incompatible, but which reflect the contradictions of the era.

Designs for the planned city of Kritovo (never built) are categorized under both "transparency" — focusing on the open-plan aspects of new mass housing — and "capsule," symbolized by the new "micro-districts" of apartment blocks, and the retreat of society into the interior worlds of individual experience.

For both Kurlyandtseva and Kikodze, the project is optimistic: "It gives us ground under our feet, tells us that it's possible, but that certain things need to be done..." says Kikodze, arguing that it is vital that Russian society understands that things don't happen by themselves. "We had a chance to realize this project, and it didn't work out, but we still have that chance," she says.

Yet amid all the optimism on show, there is a lingering feeling that perhaps both retrospectives are guilty of taking a view of the period that is too rose-tinted, that they ultimately avoid uncomfortable questions that are particularly resonant today. Was Soviet society complicit in the end of the Thaw by an unwillingness to risk the gains it had made? Would another society have acted more boldly in defense of its values?

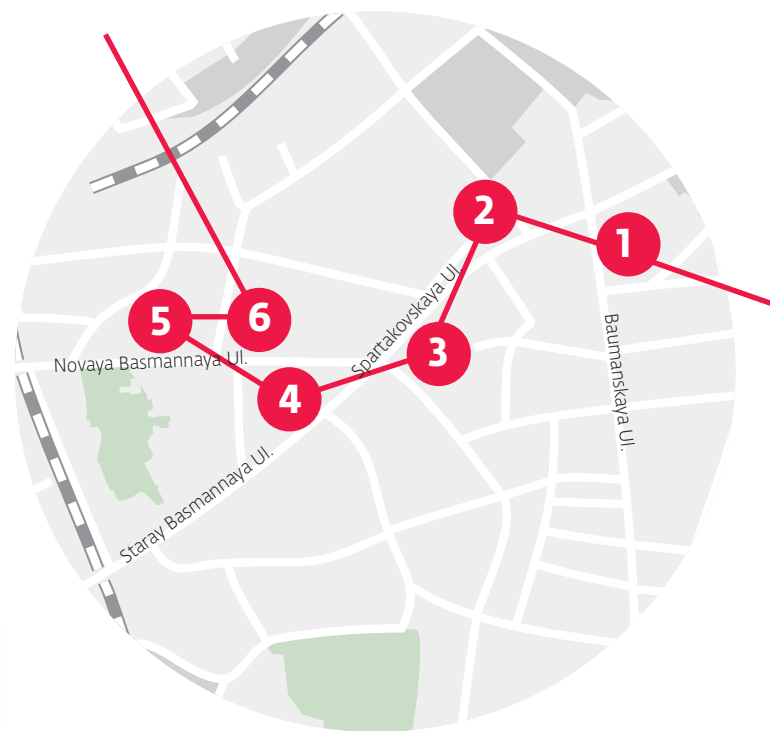
There is also a disturbing parallel with the present. The Thaw was not the last time that a period of relative openness came to an end with Moscow's military intervention in a neighboring country that the Kremlin feared was slipping away from its orbit.

**Ottepel**  
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February 16 — June 11  
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<http://treyakov.ru>  
Metro Oktyabrskaya  
**Moskovskaya Ottepel: 1953-1968**  
Museum of Moscow  
To April 12  
2 Zubovsky Bulvar  
<http://mosmuseum.ru>  
Metro Park Kultury

# Basmanny Neighborhood: Spartacus, Pushkin and a Lost 13th-Century Poem

By **Daria Demidova** artsreporter@imedia.ru

The quarter's architectural legacy hints at past wealth and influence



**70**  
years



## 1) Baumanskaya metro station

33/2 Baumanskaya Ulitsa, Bldg 2

As you get off at Baumanskaya metro station (opened in 1944), linger for a while. The Roman-style pattern on the floor and piers allude to the original plan to name the station after Spartacus, the leader of a slave uprising in Rome in 73 B.C. As construction progressed, the ancient hero was replaced by Russian revolutionary Nikolai Bauman (assassinated in 1905), with bronze statues of soldiers and workers taking the places reserved for rebellious slaves. Passengers touch them for luck — note the shine.

was the life cycle of the escalator at Baumanskaya station — it wasn't replaced until 2015

## 2) Epiphany Cathedral at Yelokhovo

15 Spartakovskaya Ulitsa

This cathedral is dear to many admirers of Russia's greatest and most beloved poet Alexander Pushkin, who was baptized here in 1799. In fact, today's splendid cathedral, built in the Empire style, is not Pushkin's contemporary but a 19th-century reconstruction. The turbulent 20th century thankfully left no impact on the building but for a bizarre elevator encased in a glass shaft that was added to the northern wall in 1997.

## 3) The Musin-Pushkin estate

2/1 Spartakovskaya Ulitsa

This orderly Neoclassical mansion is notable not only for what remains of times gone by but for what has been lost forever. Its owner, Count Alexei Musin-Pushkin, was an ardent antiquarian who discovered the medieval manuscript of "The Tale of Igor's Campaign," a 13th-century poem. The only original copy of the poem perished in the 1812 Fire of Moscow, when the servants failed to rescue their absent master's library. Nowadays, the building houses the Moscow State Construction University.



## 4) Basmanny hospital

26 Novaya Basmannaya Ulitsa, Bldg 1

Once owned by aristocrat and powerful businessman Nikita Demidov, this cream-colored manor complex was dubbed "Moscow's Hermitage" owing to its large collection of fine arts. It is one of the few mansions on the street that did not succumb to fire in 1812. Later, it was passed to a charity and was transformed into a medical ward for laborers (the institution is still in use), but it remains in good condition both inside and out.

## 5) The Shibaev estate

23A Novaya Basmannaya Ulitsa

Since most of the mansions in the area conform to the Neoclassical or Empire styles, it's worth seeing something a little different. Number 23a, a distinctive green mansion ornamented with vibrant tiles à la Russe, reflects the nature and character of the Shibaev merchant family who lived here at the end of the 19th century: pioneers of Russia's petrochemical industry and devout Old Believers. The façade is regaining its former brightness as restoration progresses.

If you have time, end your walk in the Bauman Garden, visited by 500,000 people every year

## 6) Basmannaya police station

29 Novaya Basmannaya Ulitsa

The building's first owner, Prince Nikolai Trubetzkoy, was a key figure of Russian Freemasonry and an active proponent of the Russian Enlightenment until he was exiled for political reasons in 1792. In the 19th century, the house became a police station and detention center, but ironically remained a bastion of independent thought, with intellectuals such as writer Vladimir Korolenko and poet Vladimir Mayakovsky among its detainees.



Matryoshka's restrained aesthetic and contemporary approach take the Russian restaurant into bold new territory.

# Matryoshka: Leading the Russian Revolution

By **Alastair Gill** [a.gill@imedia.ru](mailto:a.gill@imedia.ru)

*Latest addition to Maison Dellos empire reinvents the Russian restaurant genre*

It's always a pleasant surprise to find your expectations turned on their head — or at least it is when you head to a new Russian restaurant expecting bear-and-balalaika stereotypes and find the bar has been raised and the rules rewritten.

For foreigners who've spent any real time in the country, the notion of the "Russian restaurant" comes with a list of clichés longer than the Volga. So it was natural to assume that the new doll on the block, Matryoshka, would justify the trepidation that years of false log-cabin interiors, peasant-style tablecloths and stuffed animals program you to associate with dining out "à la Russe."

Occupying two floors in the Congress Park complex on the embankment next to the Hotel Ukraina at Kievskaya, Matryoshka is the newest member of Cafe Pushkin creator Andrei Dellos' eponymous stable of upmarket restaurants, along with the likes of Fahrenheit, Kazbek and Bochka.

Maison Dellos has clearly set out to create a restaurant aimed at contemporary Moscow urbanites rather than tourists — Russian cuisine reinterpreted for sophisticated, post-hipster tastes.

This is served in a setting which, if not entirely original, takes the genre out of the peasant cottage and the 19th-century drawing room and into an aesthetic that's part English country hotel, part 1940s Soviet apartment and part Brooklyn deli.

The upper floor fuses modern elements — an open kitchen and overhead industrial ventilators — with high-backed floral armchairs, wooden paneling and potted palms. Downstairs, antique lampshades hover over tables alongside racks of pickled tomatoes while leather sofas sprawl beneath white tiled walls.

Matryoshka avoids the temptation to lump Ukrainian recipes together with Russian ones, concentrating on standards like blini, pirozhki, fish,

meat and poultry dishes — though oddly there's no place for delicacies such as venison or bear.

The menu aims at reinterpreting traditional (i.e. pre-Soviet) Russian cuisine, but don't take the presence of modern favorite Olivier salad (950 rubles, \$16.50) as a deception, because here it has been returned to its bourgeois glory — think quail and caviar instead of "sausage" and mayonnaise. A highlight of the starter menu is selyanka with roast duck (650 rubles), a balanced medley of aromatic sauerkraut, turnip, juicy slices of plum and caraway seed, a nod toward the historic influence of Baltic German cuisine on Russian food.

The mains offer a chance to try more complex Russian dishes such as stuffed pike (690 rubles), served up just as it should be: melt-in-the-mouth fish blended with herbs and vegetables then reshaped into discs and wrapped in skin. It comes with mashed pumpkin and horseradish. From the

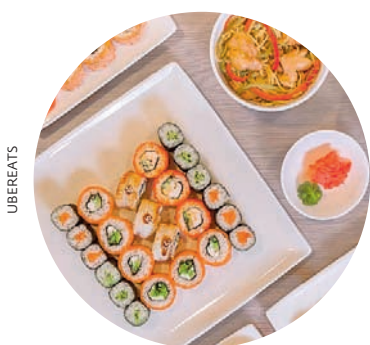
traditional meat dishes, Moscow-style beef with mash and rye malt sauce (740 rubles) is a slow-cooked, punchy goulash — real Russian soul food.

Now the caveat — there are a few crumples to iron out before Matryoshka finds its feet. This concerns the service, which falls very much into the tiresome category of bother-the-customer-to-death-until-they're-ready-to-order, with a rotating cast of wait staff adjusting your chair, pushing menus at you then asking for your drinks order immediately before hovering awkwardly in the background while you pore over the menu. Hopefully these minor grumbles will be resolved by the time Matryoshka moves out of test mode and diners start turning up in larger numbers.

**+7 495 025 25 65**

[www.matryoshka-rest.ru](http://www.matryoshka-rest.ru)  
2/1 Kutuzovsky Prospekt, Bldg 6  
Metro Kievskaya

## NEWS & OPENINGS



### UberEATS

#### UberEATS Launched

Popular taxi app Uber launched its food delivery service UberEATS in Moscow in February. UberEATS is available to both Apple and Android users, but orders can also be placed via the official website [ubereats.com](http://ubereats.com). Uber subscribers can use their regular accounts, while new users will have to register. The app works with several hundred Moscow restaurants, including Zotman, Khachapuri, Burger Brothers, Chaikhona #1 and Upside Down Cake. Delivery is only available within the Third Transport Ring, from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. [ubereats.com/moscow/](http://ubereats.com/moscow/)



### Sosedi

#### Soviet Breakfasts and Wine

Sosedi (Neighbors) is a new place run by the team behind the Vinny Bazar chain, including chef Ilya Lustin. Located right next to Vinny Bazar's original location, Sosedi offers two menus — morning and evening. The main idea is to revitalize recipes from traditional Soviet cuisine, especially breakfasts and desserts. Pancakes with sour cream are 190 rubles, while a new take on Olivier salad with tuna is 350 rubles. There's also an extensive wine list.

**+7 (499) 245 4932**

[facebook.com/cafesosedi2017/](https://facebook.com/cafesosedi2017/)  
14/2 Komsomolsky Prospekt, Bldg. 1  
Metro Park Kultury



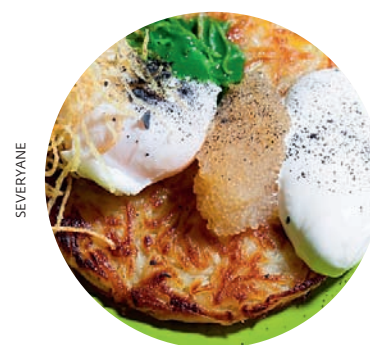
### Laflafel

#### More Good Food from Laflafel

A second outpost of Laflafel has opened on Ulitsa Maroseika, focusing on Indian cuisine. It offers Tibetan momo dumplings with different fillings as well as dosa, traditional South Indian fermented rice and lentil pancakes for 380 rubles (\$6.50). Shakshuka, the Mediterranean breakfast dish of eggs and vegetables, is available at 290 rubles, as well as masala tea and coffees from local roasters Rockets.

**+7 (495) 204 2067**

[facebook.com/Ланчерия-на-Маросейке-271470909949056/](https://facebook.com/Ланчерия-на-Маросейке-271470909949056/)  
4/2 Ulitsa Maroseika, Bldg. 1. Metro Kitai Gorod



### Severyane

#### Severyane's New Breakfasts

One of the most innovative restaurants in Moscow has rolled out a selection of new breakfast options. Try the whipped yogurt with apples for 200 rubles (\$3.40) or cottage cheese pastry rings (350 rubles) or go all out and order poached eggs with Parmesan and pastrami (400 rubles) or an omelet with cauliflower (450 rubles). Get an espresso-based coffee or a matcha-latte and all your breakfast needs are satisfied.

**+7 (495) 700 0898**

[facebook.com/severyane.moscow](https://facebook.com/severyane.moscow)  
12 Ulitsa Bolshaya Nikitskaya  
Metro Biblioteka im. Lenina, Okhotny Ryad

# 7 Novel Ideas for Women's Day

## Our guide to a memorable and romantic March 8

Want to treat your wife, girlfriend or lover to a memorable International Women's Day but can't think of anything besides taking her out to dinner? Or perhaps you're a member of the fairer sex and you just feel like spoiling yourself on March 8, but need some inspiration. The Moscow Times has put together a list of places to enjoy this celebration of womanhood in Moscow, from traditional romantic options to more dynamic outdoor activities.

### Get Over It All

#### Fly a hot-air balloon high above the city

Get a bird's-eye view of Moscow by taking your lover or best friends on an enchanting hot-air balloon flight with Aerowaltz. The company is offering a discount campaign that coincides with Women's Day, so it's added incentive to take advantage of the offer. You can even request a heart-shaped balloon. Magic carpet not included.

aerowaltz.ru

88 Volokolamskoye Shosse, Bldg 8, office 225  
Metro Tushinskaya



AEROWALTZ.RU

Going on a hot-air balloon flight over the city and surroundings will be an unforgettable experience - just make sure you wrap up warm for the occasion.

### Soak Up the Feeling

#### Pamper yourself with a new look or massage

Want to celebrate your womanhood? Or get a jump-start on shaping up for spring? Spend the day at a spa! There's no shortage of spas in Moscow, but for those who don't speak Russian, try the Expat Salon. Their employees all speak English and will try their best to make your haircut, manicure, pedicure or massage luxurious and comfortable.

expatsalon.ru

3 Maly Patriarshy Pereulok  
Metro Mayakovskaya



PIXABAY

Established in 1917 to glorify women workers, by the late Soviet era *Women's Day had been sentimentalized into Valentine's Day, Mother's Day and Employee of the Month all in one.*

### Romantic Rendezvous

#### An intimate date in a basement speakeasy

Want to escape with your lover to a dark corner? Head down to Bar Mendeleev, a secret underground cocktail bar with live jazz, a retro interior and dim lighting to set the mood. It's located through the back of a tiny noodle shop called Lucky Noodles. There's no code word to get in, but make sure you look good because the face control is tough.

mendeleevbar.ru

20/1 Ulitsa Petrovka  
Metro Trubnaya

### Flowers at the Finish Line

#### Show your love in your running shoes

If you want to avoid the crowds of Gorky Park and VDNKh but still fancy a romantic stroll in the fresh air, why not head out to Fili Park? It's a lovely park in late winter, and on March 8 men who are feeling brave and full of energy can even take part in the annual flower run, a 2-kilometer jog holding a bouquet of tulips to give to your beloved at the finish line. The action starts at 11 a.m. at the main entrance to the park.

Ulitsa Bolshaya Filyovskaya

Metro Filyovsky Park



HORTUS.RU

### A Real Cheese-Fest

#### Party in Moscow's oldest botanical garden

After the success of its last Women's Day celebration — when over 6,800 people turned up — the Apothecaries' Garden is holding an event called "The Arrival of Spring: Rehearsal," featuring rare tulips, free cheesemaking classes (courtesy of leading Russian cheesemaker Marina Kamantina) and a traditional farmer's market offering bread, (more) cheeses, puddings, fruit juices and mulled wine. The entrance fee is 300 rubles (\$5.20).

hortus.ru

26 Prospekt Mira, Bldg 1.  
Metro Prospekt Mira

### Get in the Saddle

#### Ride horses through a snowy forest

If you're searching for a romantic outing that's truly out of the ordinary, how about horseback riding through picturesque forests and meadows? This is perfect weather — not too cold, but fresh snow on the ground. The Ashukino horse farm is located 30 kilometers from Moscow — just far enough away to escape the bustling city for a relaxing afternoon in nature. The 1,200-ruble (\$20.75) cost of a one-hour ride includes instruction in the basics of horseback riding. Advance bookings are mandatory.

+7 (967) 053 0792

+7 (963) 660 5109

2 Ulitsa Lermontova, Ashukino,  
Moscow region



PIXABAY

### She Shall Go to the Ball

#### Dress up and dance the afternoon away

If you've always dreamed of attending a Russian ball but don't know how to dance, the Russian Waltz can teach you and your lover how to trip the light fantastic. Ladies, don an evening dress or ball gown. Gents, put on a smart jacket or a tux. Tickets are 500 rubles (\$8.50) and food is available. From 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. — book in advance.

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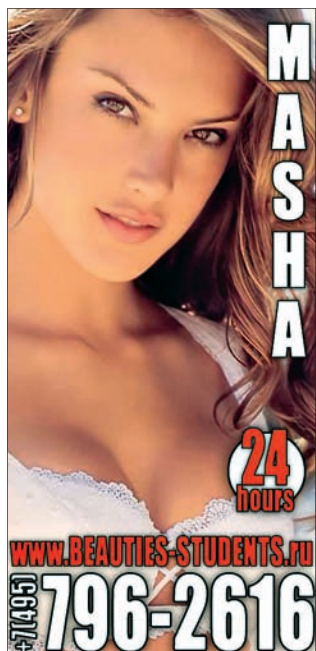
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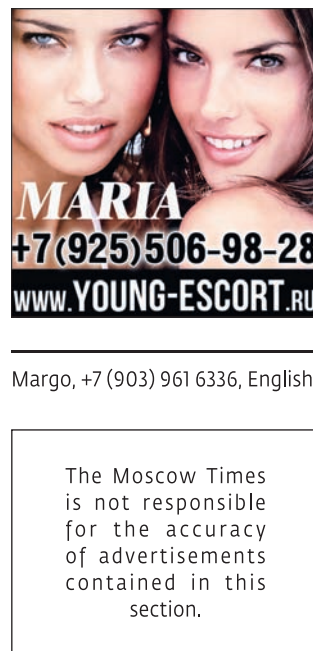
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# 16 What's On 2.03—8.03

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Dewar's Powerhouse  
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facebook.com/dewars.  
powerhouse  
7/4 Goncharnaya Ulitsa, M. Taganskaya

## 03.03

**Sophie Ellis-Bextor**  
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Yotaspacespace  
+7 (495) 230 1030  
yotaspacespace.ru  
11 Ulitsa Ordzhonikidze, M. Leninsky Prospekt

## 04.03

**Dugma**  
Award-winning documentary from Norway offering a glimpse into the lives of Al-Qaeda suicide bombers, at 7 p.m.  
Karo 11 Okyabr.  
+7 (903) 208 8459  
karofilm.ru  
24 Novy Arbat, M. Arbatskaya

## 05.03

**Music Jamboree**  
A mix of musicians from Russia, U.S., U.K. and Ireland, playing all styles, all free of charge, 3-8 p.m.  
Jimi Club  
+7 (967) 053 1888  
jimiclub.ru  
3 Protopopovskiy Pereulok, M. Prospekt Mira

## 06.03

**Three Tenors**  
Metropolitan Opera's Raul Melo, Adam Klein and Adam Hershkowitz in concert  
Dom Muzyki  
+7 (495) 730 4350  
mmdm.ru  
52 Kosmodianskaya Naberezhnaya, Bldg. 8, M. Paveletskaya

## 07.03

**Facing the future**  
Art in Europe 1945-1968: Marc Chagall, Pablo Picasso, Lucian Freud, and Georg Baselitz  
Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts  
+7 (495) 609 9520  
arts-museum.ru  
12 Volkhonka, M. Kropotkinskaya

## 08.03

**Silk Labyrinth**  
A collection of rare dresses by Hermès from the collection of Maison Carré Foundation  
All-Russian Decorative Art Museum  
+7 (499) 973 3219  
vmdpni.ru  
3 Ulitsa Delegatskaya, M. Novoslobodskaya

## From Chekhov to Shakespeare: 5 Performances Not To Miss at This Year's Golden Mask

By **Andrei Muchnik** artsreporter@imedia.ru

Golden Mask is Moscow's largest festival devoted to theater, which plays an extremely important role in the cultural life of the city. While Golden Mask has been around since 1993, it really came into its own and rose to its current prominence under Eduard Boyakov, who is now the director of the cutting-edge Praktika theater.

Lately, the Ministry of Culture has even got involved in nominating the jury members, which led to some protests in 2015. For this reason, two of the directors considered among the most prominent on the Moscow theater scene — Kirill Serebrennikov and Konstantin Bogomolov — refused to participate in the 23rd edition of Golden Mask.

Nevertheless, the festival is still a rare opportunity to see the most interesting productions from all over Russia. The festival lasts almost three months, but we have picked five must-see performances to look out for. Get your tickets well ahead.

**1) The Voronezh Chamber Theater** (Kamerny Teatr), one of Russia's better-known regional theaters, is often among the Golden Mask nominees. Last year's production of Anton Chekhov's beloved play "Uncle Vanya" has been nominated in seven different categories. Director Mikhail Bychkov's version is a classical interpretation of Chekhov's work and faithful to the original text. Nonetheless, there are a few quirks — many of the scenes take place on multi-level bunk beds.  
March 30, 7 p.m.  
Oleg Tabakov Theater / Stage on Sukharevskaya  
5 Malaya Sukharevskaya Ploshchad  
Metro Sukharevskaya



Danila Kozlovsky plays Hamlet in the St. Petersburg Maly Drama Theater's violent new production of Shakespeare's classic.

**2) "Three Sisters"** by the **Krasny Fakel** (Red Torch) theater from Novosibirsk is a recent production by Timofei Kulyabin, the man behind opera "Tannhäuser," banned for allegedly "offending religious feelings." In this version of Chekhov's play the actors communicate using sign language — viewers can read the dialogues as subtitles. This production has already been presented at Vienna's Wiener Festwochen.  
April 16-18, 7 p.m.  
Meyerhold Center (TsIM)  
23 Novoslobodskaya Ulitsa  
Metro Mendeleyevskaya

**3) The St. Petersburg Maly Drama Theater's** staging of "Hamlet" is a fresh look at the classic. Apart from Shakespeare, director Lev Dodin used texts by two of his predecessors — Danish historian Saxo Grammaticus and English chronicler Raphael Holinshed. Danila Kozlovsky, probably Russia's top film actor right now, turns out to be a villain rather than a hero in a production that becomes rather violent.  
April 5-6, 8 p.m.  
Fomenko Workshop Theater  
30/32 Kutuzovskiy Prospekt  
Metro Kutuzovskaya

**4) "The Storm"** by the **St. Petersburg Tovstogov Bolshoi Drama Theater** is a collaboration between director Andrei Moguchy, Alexander Manotskov, one of the country's leading new academic composers, and Vera Matrynov, former artistic director at Gogol Center, now art director of the New Space at the Theater of Nations. Manotskov wrote the music to Ostrovsky's play, while Matrynov thought up a unique stage design, including curtains featuring Palekh miniature paintings. Moguchy's production of "The Storm" tries to recreate theater as it was "before Stanislavsky."

April 1-2, 7 p.m.  
Maly Theater  
1 Teatralny Proezd  
Metro Teatralnaya

**5) The aptly named "Post"** theater from St. Petersburg will present its very post-modernist production "Field," by arguably the most avant-garde director in Russian theater, Dmitry Volkostrel. Based on a play by Pavel Pryazhko, who often collaborates with Volkostrel, "Field" is both a series of scenes from the lives of combine harvester drivers in Belarus and a description of the world as seen by a theoretical physicist. If that's not "post-theater" enough for you, the order in which scenes follow each other is determined by using a random number generator.

April 3, 7 p.m.; April 4, 2 p.m.  
Theater of Nations  
3 Petrovskiy Pereulok  
Metro Chekhovskaya

Golden Mask runs at venues around Moscow until April 19.

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