



# RUSSIAN THEATRE LIFE IN BRIEF

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## Newsletter of the Theatre Union of the Russian Federation (STD)

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### AT THE THEATRE UNION OF RUSSIA

#### **The 2<sup>nd</sup> National Theatre Forum *Theatre. Times of Change* (Feb.27-28, 2006, Moscow)**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> National Theatre Forum will be held February 27-28, 2006 on the initiative of the Theatre Union of Russia. Representatives of theatres from all the country's regions will attend. To a large degree the calling of such a large-scale forum is accounted for by the coming changes in the cultural field and in the activities of state-funded institutions.

As it is known, an overwhelming number of Russian theatres (especially in different regions) are state-owned or municipal institutions that are supported by the government. Even though they have never been funded sufficiently, these theatres could nevertheless count on certain guarantees that allowed them to keep a permanent troupe, production shops, service personnel and buildings, which were put under their governance. In other words, the Russian theatre has to date always been a stationary theatre typical for the Soviet period and called "the repertoire theatre" rather than the *entreprise* theatre.

With time this situation had to become contradictory to market economy laws. Russian "budgetary" theatres realised that reforms are inevitable, but government decrees on "measures to increase efficiency of budget expenditures" published in the spring of 2004 threw them into a state that was close to panic. The suggested changes that were to relate to culture institutions meant that the theatres that had previously been financed from the state budget were to be sorted into two organisational and legal categories. The first included theatres that "represented

the nation's common property", and which were now to be fully financed from the state budget, but were deprived of any independence. The second group included what was called "an autonomous institution" and their funding was to be continued for the purpose of fulfilling orders of the constitutor that is the state. Such theatres were allowed to keep their revenues, which were to be controlled by independent trusteeship councils. That means that 100-percen funding was now guaranteed only to theatres, which were regarded "the common national property". Even though the proposed changes that theatres could face seemed "reasonable", it became evident that the realisation of such changes could lead to a large-scale closure of theatres all over the country.

The reaction of Theatre Union of the RF to the published documents was immediate, and before they came into force it held a number of high-level meetings of the authoritative theatre representatives with top government officials and the Russian president, which resulted in the decision to return the draft documents to the government for re-consideration taken in 2005. At the same time, at the insistence of the Union and according to its recommendations high-level theatre specialists were included in the group rewriting the documents.

To cite the press-release of the Theatre Union, the main task of the National theatre forum slated for February, 2006 is to voice loud and clear that the State, Society and the Artist shared the responsibility for the preservation and development of the traditional Russian repertoire theatre as an integral artistic and social phenomenon, an object of non-material cultural heritage of global significance.

*The next issue of Newsletter will sum up the results of the National theatre forum, convened in connection with the possibility of effecting of what is called the "theatrical reform" in Russia.*

## **THEATRE FESTIVALS IN RUSSIA. A BRIEF DOSSIER**

*Regular information about most significant theatre festivals in Russia.*

### **BALTIC HOUSE, International Theatre Festival**

**St. Petersburg //September-October, 2006**

The Theatre Festival **Baltic House** is a unique structure of its kind in Russia, systematically promoting developments on the common European information-cultural space, restoration and strengthening of cultural relations between Russia and Baltic states as well other European countries. It is a major theatrical holding, operating since 1991 on the base of the Baltic House theatre. The general policy pursued by the holding is searching and experimenting in every sphere of theatrical life. The theatre places its scene at the disposal of most exciting performances and theatre companies, is involved in theatrical and cultural projects and holds diverse international festivals.

Aside from the large-scale international **Baltic House Festival** held in St.Petersburg in September and October annually, the holding arranges different theatrical festivals, including **Meeting in Russia**, the annual international festival of theatres from the Baltic states and the festival of Russian-speaking theatres based in the CIS and the Baltic states (former USSR republics) in March and April; **Monocle**, a biannual international festival of mono-performances (last edition – 2005), **Director – Female Profession**, the international festival of performances staged by women producers, **Solntsevorot** (Solstice), the annual festival held on the shortest white night in June attended by troupes and groups featuring unusual performing arts forms. Master classes, workshops, seminars and conferences are an usual event within the framework of the festivals. They are prepared and held together with major theatrical and cultural institutions in different countries with which Baltic House has established useful long-term contacts.

#### **Baltic International Festival Centre**

4, Alexandrovsky Park, St-Petersburg, 197198 – Russia

Phone/Fax: +7 (812) 232 93 80

E-mail: [fc@baltichouse.spb.ru](mailto:fc@baltichouse.spb.ru)

Info source: [www.baltichouse.spb.ru](http://www.baltichouse.spb.ru)

### **TCHIR TCHAYAN (Spirit of the Earth), International Ethno-Ecological Puppet Festival Abakan, Republic of Khakassia // July, 2006**

The festival's theme, environment and the theatre is in demand worldwide, even though it is quite novel for Russia. Right from the start its organizer, the Khakass National Puppet Theatre *Skazka* – took its bearings from different types of the traditional puppet theatre, later

significantly expanding the festival agenda. The festival aims at presenting the art of the puppetry in the context of cultural traditions, history and ecology of different regions and countries, so the Festival program includes both theatre performances and concerts of ethnic music, seminars and conferences on ethnography and environment protection. An important part of the festival programme for the participants and guests who know but little about this Siberian region is visiting local museums and natural reserves, as well as two-to-three-day trips (down the Yenisei or staying at the mountain skiing resort). Khakassia's majestic landscapes and rich cultural traditions, as well as the well thought-out organization of the festival are an attraction for many a participant of *Tchir Tchayn*, representing the troupes from Russia and abroad, including companies from France, Belgium, Germany, Sweden, the Czech republic, Hungary, Estonia, Egypt and Turkey. In the three years since the festival started it became one of the most attractive and probably the most exotic festivals in western Siberia.

Frequency – Annual. First edition – June, 2003. Last edition – July, 2005.

Next edition – July 3-10, 2006.

#### **Skazka Khakass National Puppet Theatre**

5, K.Marks Street, 5, Abakan, Khakassia, 655017 – Russia

Phone/fax: +7 (39022) 26 165

E-mail: [skazka@khakasnet.ru](mailto:skazka@khakasnet.ru)

Info source: [www.skazka.khakassia.ru](http://www.skazka.khakassia.ru)

## **RUSSIAN HIGHER THEATRE SCHOOLS**

*Information for people interested to learn about Russia's theatrical educational institutions*

More than 70 educational institutions rearing specialists in the sphere of theatre and performing arts act in the Russian Federation. This column contains information about the best-known institutions with the status of the higher theatrical education institutions.

## **MOSCOW**

### **Russian Academy of Theatre Arts (RATI-GITIS)**

6, Maly Kislovsky pereulok, Moscow 103888, Russia

Phone: +7(495) 290 04 11 / 290 05 97

Fax: +7(495) 202 27 53

E-mail: [international@gitis.net](mailto:international@gitis.net)

The Academy's history dates back to late 19<sup>th</sup> century and are connected to the School of Music opened in Moscow in 1878 under the aegis of the Society of Lovers of Music and Drama. In the 1920s the school was accorded the status of a state educational institution under the name of the State Institute of Musical Drama. In September, 1922 the institute became part of the Higher Theatrical Workshops under Vsevolod Meyerhold, which now was known as the State Institute of Theatrical Arts (*GITIS*). The idea of its founders was that *GITIS* had to be an umbrella institution for tutorship in three main forms of theatrical arts, including drama, opera and choreography. In 1991 *GITIS* was given the name of the Russian Academy of Theatre Arts. Nowadays it is one of Russia's major theatrical educational institutions, with 1,500 students and post-graduates from Russia and other countries studying there annually. The Academy holds *Podium*, the International festival of theatre schools on a biannual basis (with the latest event taking place in 2005).

There are 8 theatre specialization departments: **Acting; Musical Theatre directing; Ballet-Master faculty; Variety Theatre; Theatre Management and Production; Set design; Theatre history and Criticism.**

Info source: [www.gitis.net](http://www.gitis.net)

### **Moscow Art Theatre School**

6, Tverskaya Street, build.7, Moscow, 125009 Russia

Phone: +7 (495) 629 39 36 / 629 77 12

Fax: +7 (495) 629 57 67

E-mail: [mhatschool@theatre.ru](mailto:mhatschool@theatre.ru)

The Moscow Art Theatre School was opened in 1943 as an affiliation of the Moscow Art Theatre (*MKhAT*). The idea of its creation belonged to Vladimir Nemirovitch-Danchenko, a close associate of Konstantin Stanislavsky. Initially, the school aimed at rearing professional actors for

*MKhAT*. The core of the acting method taught at the school was originally developed by Stanislavsky to instill in the disciples an acute sense of genuinely organic acting that was close to people's behavior in real life. The fundamentals of the Stanislavsky system have retained their priority meaning to date. Nevertheless, during the time it exists The Moscow Art Theatre School has significantly expanded the scope of disciplines taught and has been actively integrating into the practice of the world's theatre. The Moscow Art Theatre School has developed partnership with some of the leading theatre schools, such as Paris Conservatory, London Academy of Musical and Dramatic Arts, Theatre School of Strasbourg. From April, 2003 Moscow Art Theatre School participated in the international educational project TEMPUS (TEMPUS "Russia/Europe Mobility & ECTS within the European Modern Languages"), successfully completed in October, 2005. For the last several years the Moscow Art Theatre School has trained sizeable groups of American students from the Institute for Advanced Theatre Training at Harvard University.

There are 5 theatre specialization departments: **Acting; Directing; Stage design; Costume design; Performing arts management.**

*Info source:* [www.mhatschool.theatre.ru](http://www.mhatschool.theatre.ru)

### **Boris Shchukin Theatre Institute**

**Affiliated with the Evgeni Vakhtangov State Academic Theatre**

12-a, Bolshoy Nikolopestovskiy pereulok, Moscow, 119002 Russia

Phone: +7(495) 241 56 44

Fax: +7(495) 241 56 44

E-mail: [sh-tea-inst@mail.ru](mailto:sh-tea-inst@mail.ru)

The history of the Boris Shchukin Theatre Institute began at an amateur theatre studio under Yevgeni Vakhtangov, then a young actor working at the famous *MKhAT*. October 23, 1914 when Vakhtangov read his first lecture is the official date of the establishment of the institute. Boris Shchukin, one of the first graduates of the institution was Vakhtangov's favorite disciple. His name was later given to this theatrical school. The Evgeni Vakhtangov theatre then appeared on the base of that studio. In 1937 a new educational institution was established under its aegis. In 2002 the school was accorded the status of an institute. At present, besides Russian students there are students from South Korea, the United States, France, Israel and Moldova.

There are two theatre specialization departments: **Acting; Directing.**

*Info source:* [www.vakhtangovschool.ru](http://www.vakhtangovschool.ru)

### **Mikhail Shchepkin Higher Theatre College**

**Affiliated with the State Academic Maly Theatre**

6/2, build.12, Neglinnaya, Moscow, 125009 Russia

Phone/Fax: +7 (495) 921 11 37

E-mail: [shepkinschool@mtu\\_net.ru](mailto:shepkinschool@mtu_net.ru)

The school's history began in 1809 when Emperor Alexander I decreed to set up the first Moscow's theatrical school. A wide range of specialties was offered to its students, including drama artist, ballet dancer, musician, props maker and stage-hand. The obligatory disciplines included vocals, dances, fencing and the use of several musical instruments. Upon graduation, the students got jobs at Moscow's and St.Petersburg's theatres. The school's history of 1840s and 1850s was related to the great Russian actor Mikhail Shchepkin, who had lectured at this institution for 30 years, and whose name was then given to the school. In 1918 the school came under the patronage of the Maly Theatre, soon turning into a theatrical college. In 1943 the college was accorded the status of "the higher theatre educational institution" it bears to date. Significantly, starting from 1950, when the first national studio for Yakutia was established, this school was the supplier of creative theatre workers for the small national republics of Russia. Altogether specialists for 32 national and ethnic studios have been trained at the Shchepkin School. Of late the school has helped form national studios for a number of foreign countries. There are 4 theatre specialization departments: **Acting; Directing; History of Arts; Body balance.**

## **ST.PETERSBURG**

## **St-Petersburg State Theatre Arts Academy**

34, Mokhovaya, St-Petersburg, 191028 Russia

Phone/Fax: +7 (812) 272 17 89

E-mail: [international@tart.spb.ru](mailto:international@tart.spb.ru)

In 2004 the St.Petersburg State Theatre Arts Academy celebrated its 225<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This oldest Russian state theatrical institution was established in St.Petersburg in 1779. A newly organized "Theatre School", a predecessor of the Theatre Arts Academy, was growing rapidly assimilating St.Petersburg State Theatre Arts Academy and taking under its wing a number of the city's independent theatre classes and schools. It was later given the name of the Petersburg Theatre College. Throughout its history the College has survived several reorganizations. Since 1962 it was known as the Leningrad State Institute of Theatre, Music and Cinematography (*LGITMiK*). The Academy was given its present-day name in 1993. The buildings the Academy occupies are architectural monuments of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its main building – a three storey-building is an illustrious example of the modern style.

The Academy now has an average annual roll of around 900 full time students.

There are 4 theatre specialization departments: **Drama; Puppetry; Set design and Stage technology; Theatre history and Studies.**

Students from abroad may take full-time education courses for BA and MA level being part of the entire educational process, or assimilate into Russian classes for a year/semester.

*Info source:* [www.tart.spb.ru](http://www.tart.spb.ru)

## **EKATERINBURG (Urals region)**

### **Ekaterinburg State Theatre Institute**

2, Vainera, Ekaterinburg, 620077 – Russia

Phone: +7 (343) 371 76 45 / 371 76 63

E-mail: [egti@mail.ur.ru](mailto:egti@mail.ur.ru)

Since 1960 the Institute was known as a theatrical college. In 1985 it was given the status of a state theatrical institute, and is now the chief educational institution to rear creative cadres of the highest qualification to theatres of the Urals, Siberia and the Far East.

There are 4 theatre specialization departments: **Acting (drama and cinema); Puppetry (acting); Musical Theatre (acting); Voice and Speech training; History of Arts.**

*Info source:* [www.egti.ru](http://www.egti.ru)

## **YAROSLAVL (Central Volga Region)**

### **Yaroslavl State Theatre Institute**

43, Pervomaiskaya, Yaroslavl, 150000 – Russia

Phone/Fax: +7 (0852) 72 81 11

E-mail: [yugti@rambler.ru](mailto:yugti@rambler.ru)

The city of Yaroslavl is believed to be the home town of the profession Russian theatre. It was here that in 1750 Fyodor Volkov set up an amateur theatre company, based on which in 1756 the first professional public theatre was organised in St.Petersburg. The Fyodor Volkov drama theatre in Yaroslavl is regarded as Russia's oldest theatre. In 1969 its company organised a theatrical school. Thanks to its successful development in 1981 it was accorded the status of a state theatre institute. Its graduates currently work in many well-known Russian theatres.

There are 3 theatre specialization departments: **Acting (drama and cinema, musical theatre, puppetry); Directing (drama, puppetry); Stage design (drama, puppetry)**

*Info source:* [www.theatrina-yar.ru](http://www.theatrina-yar.ru)

## **ONE-LINE NEWS**

- The first session of the recently incorporated **Public Chamber of the Russian Federation** was held on January 23, 2006. Its members include leading scientists and cultural figures. A number of committees were formed in it. **The Commission for Culture Development was headed by Aleksandr Kalyagin, Chairman of the Theatre Union of Russia.**
- A magnificent gala concert marking the start of the **Year of Armenia in Russia** took place at State Kremlin Palace On January 24, 2006. Among numerous cultural events planned for the year to take place in Moscow, St.Petersburg, Ekaterinburg, Perm, Saratov and

Vladivostok envisage tours of Armenian theatres including the Gabriel Sundukian National Academic theatre, the Yerevan-based Stanislavsky Russian Drama Theatre, the Chamber theatre and the Rachiya Kaplanian Drama theatre in Yerevan.

- In the last week of January **The Week of Mozartian Music**, a festival dedicated to the 250<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of the genius of Austrian music opened in St.Petersburg.
- The world's only stationary **Gypsy theatre Romen** based in Moscow celebrated its 75 years. The company consists of 70 actors.
- In the first month of the year **The Tartar Galiasgar Kamal Academic Theatre** was on tour in Moscow, staging its productions at the Academic Maly Theatre. The biggest attraction was the production of *Grigory's Brothers* based on Tartar folklore.
- On January 22, 2006 **Igor Moiseev**, the founder and leader of the **State Folk Dance Ensemble** (established in 1937) celebrated his 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Festivities dedicated to the event took place at the stage of the Kremlin Palace in Moscow.
- **The Student Theatre of the State Moscow University (MGU)** celebrated its 250 years. On January 25, the Day of St.Tatiana, which is traditionally regarded as The Student Day in Russia festivities took place in Moscow.
- In early February the **13<sup>th</sup> National Pushkin Festival** will be held in Pskov.
- February 11 to 19, 2006 the Kazan-based Musa Jalil Tartar Opera and Ballet theatre will be the venue of the **24<sup>th</sup> International Fyodor Shaliapin Opera Festival**.

***In the next issue: Golden Mask, the annual festival of the Russia's best performing arts productions and National Golden Mask Award.***

*For more information about any particular event please contact the STD Information Centre.  
E-mail: [jd@stdrf.ru](mailto:jd@stdrf.ru)*