



RUSSIAN THEATRE LIFE IN BRIEF

Newsletter of the Theatre Union of the Russian Federation (STDF)

Theatre Union of the Russian Federation
10, Strastnoy blvd, Moscow 107031, Russia
Tel: + 7 (495) 200 1546 / 629 3894
Fax: + 7 (495) 230 2258
E-mail: td@stdrf.ru Web: www.stdrf.ru

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IN THIS ISSUE:

- **AT THE THEATRE UNION OF RUSSIA**
The 2nd National theatre forum *Theatre. Times of Change*
***Kunst-Art-Performance*, festival competition, dedicated to the 300th anniversary of the**
German music and drama theatre in Russia (February 20-23, Moscow)
Summary of Season 42, the annual exhibition of Moscow's theatre designers (March 9-
22, Moscow)
- **GOLDEN MASK, Russian National Theatre Award and Festival (March 29 – April**
17, 2006, Moscow)
- **INTERNET PROJECT *CULTU.RU!* Internet broadcasting of Russian performing**
arts
- **THEATRE FESTIVALS AND COMPETITIONS IN RUSSIA. A BRIEF DOSSIER**
***ARABESQUE — 2006*, the 9th Competition of Ballet Dancers, Perm, April 19-29, 2006**
- **ONE-LINE NEWS**
Recent and coming theatre events in Russia

AT THE THEATRE UNION OF RUSSIA

The 2nd National theatre forum *Theatre. Times of Change*

The previous Newsletter had information about what was called “the theatre reform”, which Russia’s theatres had faced, in connection with which the Theatre Union of the Russian Federation (STDF) initiated the National Theatre Forum slated for February 27-28, 2006. The forum was to review the measures the government’s bill included. However it was decided to postpone its holding till May 15-16, 2006, because the government’s documents have not been finished yet. *Russian Theatre Life in brief* will keep you informed about the development of the situation.

Contact:

Gennady Smirnov

Theatre Union of the Russian Federation

Vice-President

E-mail: gasstdrf@yandex.ru

Kunst-Art-Performance

300th Anniversary of German Music and Drama Theatre in Russia

This was the name of the festival and competition held February 20-23, 2006 in Moscow for students and recent graduates of Russia’s theatrical schools in the “under 30-years“ category. The competition was initiated and organized by the German Embassy in Moscow, the Theatre

Union of Russia, and the Central Aleksandr Bakhrusin Theatre Museum. The name of the festival has the word *Kunst* (the German for “arts”), which is also the name of Johann Kunst, the famous 18th century German actor, entrepreneur and playwright. Kunst was invited by Emperor Peter the Great with an eye at “implanting” Europe’s theatre in Russia. Johann Kunst did his best to open Russia’s first public theatre, which was opened in 1702. A special building was erected for it in Red Square, Moscow’s downtown, which featured baroque style performances.

The competition participants were not asked to reconstruct the 18th century theatre as such. The main thing was “the epoch immersion”, in other words, learning the iconography and literature of the time, work with the texts of the plays and possibility of their rendering in the present-day context. In the end, some of the baroque material “cumbersome” to the present-day audience, began to sound like most acute modern plays.

Curators:

Sabine Hofmann

Culture Department

German Embassy in Moscow

E-mail: sabine.hofmann@diplo.de

Elena Tochilko

Theatre Union of the Russian Federation

Department for Artistic Projects

E-mail: tochilko@mail.ru

Summary of Season 42

March 9 to 22 the Theatre Union of Russia (*STD*) held the annual exhibition of Moscow theatre designers, where stage productions of the 2004-2005 season were presented. The exhibition was held for the 42nd time. This year it was staged at Novy Manezh, one of the best exhibition halls in Moscow’s downtown. 78 theatre and costume designers participated in the display, showing more than 200 drafts of stage sets, costumes, scale models, installations and video presentations. Summary of Season is now an essential attraction of Moscow’s theatrical and artistic life. Aside from the demonstration of exhibits for a wide circle of spectators, the exhibition draws the attention of arts critics, leading theatre producers, and people from museums, arts galleries and private collections, interested in establishing professional contacts with the artists represented at the display.

Curator:

Inna Mirzoian

Theatre Union of the Russian Federation

Department for Scenography

imirz@mail.ru

GOLDEN MASK

The National Russian Theatre Award and Festival

March 29 to April 17, 2006 Moscow is the time when Moscow welcomes Russia’s most prestigious performing arts festival and competition, crowned with the national Golden Mask award. The festival is an annual event, presenting the best drama, opera, ballet and puppetry productions of the previous season selected by a board of experts consisting of theatre critics, journalists and theatre managers. In accordance with the decisions of a jury composed of theatre professionals, the prestigious Golden Mask award is conferred upon the best productions, directors, actors and stage designers nominated in some two dozen categories.

The national theatre award was founded by the Theatre Union of the Russian Federation. The first Golden Mask awards ceremony was held on March 13, 1995. In 1996 the Golden Mask received the status of a national, All-Russian Festival. At present, the nomination categories have been expanded to include - in addition to the main nominations for best acting, directing, conducting, choreography and set design - a number of nominations that are very important for

modern Russian theatre. These are the special awards for 'Lifetime Achievement' and 'Support of Russian Theatre'. Two other special awards, 'Best Foreign Production Presented in Russia' and the 'Critics and Journalists Award' were established in 1998. The three winners of 'Lifetime Achievement', 'Support of Russian Theatre' and 'Best Foreign Production Presented in Russia' are announced before the start of the festival. In 2004 this award was conferred upon the production of Eimuntas Necrosius *Seasons. Joys of Spring and Autumn Wealth* and in 2005 Pina Bausch was announced the winner in this nomination. This year Michael Thalheimer's production of *Emilia Galotti* was named 'Best Foreign Production Presented in Russia in the Previous Season'.

An important part of the Golden Mask Festival is the Russian Case, a special international program that is addressed to the large contingent of international guests (about 100 guests from some 30 countries), including festival and theatre directors, promoters, programmers and theatre critics. The goal of the Russian Case is to update the international theatre community on recent developments in Russian theatre. Over the years directors of important international festivals, such as the Avignon Festival, the Edinburgh Festival, BITEF, NITRA, have been among the Golden Mask Festival guests.

The Festival has developed a program of introducing Golden Mask winners and nominees to various regions of Russia. Such touring festivals have already been held in some dozen Russian cities.

In November 2005 the Golden Mask held its first international project presenting the best of Russian theatre in Estonia. The project was implemented with the support of the Russian Federal Agency for Culture and Cinematography, the Estonian Ministry of Culture and Municipality of Tallinn.

36 Russian productions are to be staged at this year's festival. The winners of the National Golden Mask Award will be announced April 17 at the award-giving ceremony, which will be held at the Bolshoi's New Stage.

Info source: www.goldenmask.ru

"CULTU. RU!" Internet project to feature Russian performing arts on the net

In March of 2005 the Internet project titled "*Cultu.Ru!*" was launched, which can well be regarded as one of the most interesting events in Russia's present-day cultural life. The project designers aimed at presenting the best of Russian theatre productions on the Internet. Right from the start the site, which demonstrated archive theatre performances, with digitized versions of old time productions of Georgi Tovstonogov, Anatoly Efros, Oleg Efremov and other majors of the Russian theatre, became unbelievably popular with Internet theatre-goers. The productions came under the heading of *The Greatest Theatre Productions of the Second Half of the 20th Century*. That was followed by a cycle of productions of the members of the Russian Association of Musical Theatres. Starting from 2006 placed on the site is the cycle titled *Great Actors' Names*. As a matter of fact, a vast and rich video library is being created within the framework of the project to store the works forming the history of the Russian Theatre, including restored archive recordings, productions shown at festivals and recordings made exclusively for project organisers. *Cultu.Ru!* is now engaged in making recordings of current stage productions, using the HDTV technology to ensure clean and clear picture. Aside from recording theatre productions *Cultu.Ru!* has on offer information about other cultural events. Last year the site featured the 2nd World's Festival of Circus arts, and a concert of the Kuban Cossack Choir. In the near future it also plans to feature the Orchestra Festival slated for next July, a concert of young Tchaikovsky Competition participants, the jubilee concerts of the Novosibirsk Philharmonic Society and other events. The site also holds its *Theatre's Web* festival in October. 10 performances of this year's festival are going to be broadcast live on the Internet.

Live broadcasting is usually done on Wednesdays. To get more information and the schedule of the planned broadcasts you can contact the project's site www.cultu.ru, with its description and technical specifications (in Russian and English), as well as a sizeable viewers' forum.

Upcoming Programs: April 5, 2006; April 12, 2006.

Elena Levshina
Project Board
Supervisor
E-mail: info@cultu.ru
Info source: www.cultu.ru

THEATRE FESTIVALS AND COMPETITIONS IN RUSSIA. A BRIEF DOSSIER

Regular information about most significant theatre festivals in Russia.

ARABESQUE — 2006, the 9th Competition of Ballet Dancers

Perm, April 19-29

Arabesque is a biannual ballet competition held at Perm's Opera and Ballet Theatre. The first competition took place in 1990, and is open for foreign dancers enjoying as it does a high profile with the world's professional ballet. Its current artistic director is Vladimir Vassiliev, with Yekaterina Maximova heading the panel of judges.

In 1994 Arabesque was admitted and taken under patronage of UNESCO. The President of the International Council of Dance (UNESCO) Milorad Miskovitch was a member of the Jury twice. The ballet competition Arabesque has already become traditional; it takes place in Perm State Tchaikovsky Opera and Ballet Theatre, one of the oldest theatres in Russia, built up in the 19th century on the initiative of the democratic community of Perm, with participation of the municipal musical society, to which belonged a world-famous family Diaghilev. In this family, in the atmosphere of worship to theatre, a well-known impresario of Russian art Sergey Diaghilev spent his youth. Now the Grand Prix of the competition Arabesque bears the name of Sergey Diaghilev. The main aims of this unique in Russia ballet competition were always the striving to open new names, to give a chance to young talented artists to show their worth, to promote classical heritage and contemporary choreography, to develop contacts with foreign representatives of ballet art.

E-mail: arabesque@permonline.ru

Info source: www.arabesque.permonline.ru

ONE-LINE NEWS

Recent and coming theatre events in Russia

- Russian theatres celebrated the **International Theatre day**, marked on March 27. In Moscow the Theatre Union of the Russian Federation organised a party for theatre veterans, and the Oleg Tabakov Charity Fund (associated with the Moscow Academic Art Theatre) hosted a regular ceremony of awarding actors, directors, lecturers of theatre educational institutions and theatre historians. St.Petersburg was the venue of a festive charity programme titled "Theatrical Games for Gertruda's Chalice" with the participation of the city's theatre schools. Spectacular shows were also staged in different Russia's cities and regions.
- **Hamlet in the Altaic language**. On March 17, 2006 the Altai Republic's National theatre in Gorno-Altaiisk premiered with Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, which for the first time ever was done in the Altaic language. The play was translated by the local writer and playwright Shatra Shatinov.
- On March 18, 2006 Russian TV Channel *Culture* launched the **festival of TV versions of productions of the Moscow-based *Sovremennik*** (The Contemporary) theatre, timed with the theatre's 50th anniversary. The festival will last till May 7, 2006. 7 productions shot in different years are on the playlist.

- ***Meetings in Russia***. This is the title of the International Festival of Russian-speaking theatres based in the CIS and Baltic countries to be held in **St.Petersburg from April 7th to 14th**.
- **2006 has been announced by China The Year of Russia**. The first theatre to open the year-long cultural programme was the State Academic Sergei Obraztsov Puppet Theatre. It featured a compilation programme of the best excerpts of productions by Sergei Obraztsov, one of the world's best-known puppeteers, staged at different times throughout his career.
- ***Stage without Frontiers*** is the name of the International festival of northern Caucasian theatres to be held in **Vladikavkaz**, in the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania **from 20 to 30 April, 2006**.
- **April 1st through 7th** a workshop will be held by **Lev Dodin** for theatre directors at the **St.Petersburg-based Maly Drama Theatre - Theatre de l'Europe**. Professionals from different Russian cities are expected to attend. Theatre directors view Lev Dodin's workshop as one of the most engrossing and productive training sessions.
- **International Theatre *Universiade*** (Student Competition) is the title of the first international festival of student amateur theatre productions. The festival, which is to be held from **April 30 to May 7, 2006** in **Chelyabinsk**, the Ural region. The event is being organised by the Students' Theatre of the South-Ural State University. 12 student companies from Russia and abroad will show their productions at the festival.
- **May 10th through 20th** the Centre "*Na Strastnom*" of the Theatre Union of Russia (Moscow) will host the **2nd festival of graduation projects of students** from different Russian theatre educational institutions. Titled *Your Chance*, the festival is expected to be attended by students from Moscow, Yekaterinburg, Nizhni Novgorod and Orel.
- **From June 16th to 25th, 2006** the **12th International Festival of Street theatres**, organised by the **Arkhangelsk** Youth theatre, will be held in that city. The festival is well known both in Russia and elsewhere. More than 100 companies from different countries were its participants in different years.

Info source: www.theatre.ru

For more information about any particular event please contact:

STD Information Centre

E-mail: id@stdrf.ru