A Guide to the Theatre Landscape in Russia
Introduction

You are about to enter the world of Russian theatre — ever-changing, dynamic, and sometimes surreal. We are going to prove to you that the special magic of theatre lives on not only in classical productions, but also in bold experimental shows, which take the narrative beyond the confines of the stage and allow the audience to take part in the performance.

We will let you have a sneak peek backstage, and become immersed in the spirit of the theatre’s day-to-day. You will witness the digital development of modern theatre and see how it is becoming closer to the public.

“While in the 20th century there were playbills, programs, brochures and theatres’ interior and exterior designs that served as their “fronts”, today it is digital platforms, in particular its website and social networks acting as them. They help not only to establish a dialogue with the audience, but also to create brand new formats of performances”, Anton Khitrov, expert of the Golden Mask theatre festival.

We hope you enjoy delving into the depths of theatre!

Your journey into this world will be guided by the leaders of theatre communities on Facebook: Theatre People, La Personne, Synchronization, Theatre Magazine, and Transformator. They were the ones that shared their expert opinion on various productions, theatres, festivals and venues that offer unique theatrical experiences both offline and online. Groups like these are the cornerstone of Facebook, where over 1.4 billion users from all over the world use social media to get together with like-minded individuals and discuss whatever interests them in a private online space.

Theatre communities provide an excellent platform for discussing theatre and following the theatre world. They will not only teach you what drives modern theatre in all its forms, but also help you meet new people that are interested in the same thing and show how theatre is developing beyond the stage. Theatre communities paint a very dynamic picture of theatre as a form of art, immersing their members into the various aspects of this creative environment.

The recommendations presented in this guide do not originate from Facebook’s teams. All of them were suggested by the Russia-based administrators of Facebook groups and pages.
Contents

2 Communities for Theatregoers
16 Theatres to Stop By
38 Feast Thine Eyes
52 Experimental Formats
68 Festivals as a World of Their Own
74 Personal Behind-the-Scenes Accounts
77 Educational Resources

Theatre-themed communities on Facebook and Instagram offer a perfect space for discussing a wealth of theatre-related topics and sharing the latest theatre news as they happen. In addition to checking out playbills for the new premieres, these communities allow you to chat with your fellow theatre lovers, who will be eager to talk about anything, from the most memorable roles of your favorite actor to the social and political issues raised by the director. In this section we will be showcasing the theatre communities on Facebook that will provide expert knowledge for our guidebook.
Every day Maxim shares interviews, articles, opinion pieces, photos and videos, and, of course, collections of fun facts and anecdotes from the theatre world. He believes that his key mission is making the art of theatre more popular in the Russian segment of the web.

Maxim also has a Theatre People blog on Instagram, which he created in 2016 and which currently brings together over 157 thousand fans of this form of art. He refuses to turn his blog into an independent website on principle: “The Theatre People community has a presence in all the popular social media, and this is more than enough for directly engaging with the audience”. The most beloved feature of the community is the live streaming, which Maxim often does when exploring the backstage of different theatres in various cities. This makes exclusive insights available to thousands of inquisitive theatregoers, while Maxim himself answers any questions they may have in real time and sheds more light on things that they find the most interesting.

“The Theatre People page is an incredible tool for addressing the theatre audience; it creates a wealth of fantastic benefits”, Maxim explains. “It brings people from different theatre spheres closer together and lets them have open and honest conversations about the problems of today’s theatre as well as instantly share all the most interesting highlights with the community. Different stats and polls on the page provide a general understanding of what people are interested in, of what displeases them, of what they suggest; this also helps the community learn about any difficulties that theatres face, and propose possible solutions”.

Maxim Drimling

Photo by: Anton Voronkov
La Personne is an independent online magazine that covers the world of ballet and any adjacent subjects. Its founders are all trustworthy sources, as they have direct links to this art medium. Alisa Aslanova, who created the magazine and acts as its Editor-in-chief, used to be a principal at the Kremlin Ballet; whereas Karina Zhitkova, the magazine’s producer and photographer, once performed as a soloist at the Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Moscow Music Theatre; and finally, producer and editor Katerina Bornovitskaya who practiced ballet as a hobby and helped organize ballet galas, now works at a company that produces pointe shoes. Winners of international ballet competitions, Alisa and Karina are more than well-equipped to talk about the various aspects of a ballet dancer’s life. The name of the magazine — La Personne — is a reference to the ballet traditions since all the terminology in the ballet originated from the French language. The magazine focuses on the most inspiring, enchanting and brightest figures of the ballet world. Hence, the motto of the magazine — “individual as art”. The young women believe that their content is one of a kind, which is what makes their project so special. According to Alisa, they
always try to present ballet history at a unique angle, presenting exclusive photos and videos on a specific subject. To bring ballet art even closer to the general public the magazine authors often make themed issues, for instance by collaborating with popular fashion brands. One of La Personne’s most recent initiatives was the #ГдеВашиПуанты (#WhereAreYourPointeShoes) hashtag on Instagram, meant to spread awareness of environmentally friendly plastic disposal. As it turns out, ballet dancers find this issue to be quite relevant, as pointe shoes are heavily plastic-based. Trying to highlight the problem as much as possible, La Personne shot a Dying Swan dance video, where the ballet dancer got tangled up in plastic bags. Alisa says that the campaign received a lot of positive attention from the community subscribers, who were profoundly moved by the magazine’s thoughtful approach.

It would be impossible to imagine the La Personne team members without their digital tools, which make sharing content with the theatre community much faster.

“Art lives in the moment, and maybe the digital format will inspire someone to experience live interactions with the world of ballet”, the community leaders believe.

La Personne has its own website; the project’s main social media platform is Facebook, but the team also crossposts its content actively to Instagram.
The Synchronization community works together with a diverse pool of culture experts. It includes Anna Ildatova and Anton Khitrov, members of the Golden Mask Theatre Award expert panel. They have shared their insights into Russian digital theatre projects.

Synchronization is a special cultural entity that conducts lectures on literature, art, theatre, cinema, and music, as well as invites its community to shows, exhibitions, and movie screenings. The project creators’ mission statement is to create “a community that is cemented by an interest in culture and a desire to be in sync with fine art and engage in mutual experience-sharing”. The community mostly posts announcements of upcoming lectures on the most notable phenomena, movements, and personalities in culture and academia, with a total of over 100 events in 19 different fields per month.

More details on the community’s activities may also be found on its Instagram page and official website. The project curators use Instagram in particular to publish collections that feature the most fascinating shows, books, and films on a variety of subjects, in addition to having philosophical discussions and more.
The Theatre Magazine community brings together the readers of the eponymous magazine. As the title may suggest, the community’s main focus is on theatre news, including not just event announcements and show reviews, but also analysis and discussions of the social issues touched upon in the respective productions. The magazine’s mission is to “change theatre for the better” not only in Russia but in other countries as well.

The magazine has both a physical printed format and an active website, with content that does not always replicate the printed version. Among other features, the online version presents a continuously updating review feed both in the blog and in the blitz section, in addition to theatre news monitoring, theatre guides and must-visit suggestions that cover the best of both Russian and foreign theatre.

The community’s leader Aleksey Kozlov notes, “We were creating the Facebook group with an idea that it was not just going to become an appendix for the magazine’s website; it was, first and foremost, supposed to turn into a platform for nourishing our community, for creating a club of like-minded people who really care about the development of theatre as an art form”.

Alla Shenderova, Zhanna Zaretskaya, Marina Davydova, Aleksey Koslov.

Photo by: Vladislav Stepanenko
The Transformator Center for Theatre Research handles the “reduction” of dramatic performance. The center’s team gradually cuts out various elements of theatrical productions: from dialog to composition to action. The community’s mission is to discover the line that separates theatre from “non-theatre”, or prove that this line does not exist at all. Its members believe that the main part of a show is what happens here and now; the interactions between actors, playwrights, and the public. Transformator is a member of the Independent Theatres’ Union, which brings together private experimental troupes and allows them to help each other with organizational issues and day-to-day challenges.

The Transformator Facebook community offers interesting articles about theatre, announcements of unusual immersive shows and festivals and news of experimental projects by the Center itself, such as The Triumph of Time and Truth, a show where “those involved perform a special kind of oratorio, following the instruction that they are offered; the degree of creative freedom varies and no preliminary preparation is required”.

Yury Sorokin, Director at the Transformator Center: “Virtual reality becomes more real than ever. This is a union of creative people in a single innovative, hi-tech field; a search for new ideas and for new forms and means of interacting with the public and one another. This is the kind of communication that the 21st century sorely needs; while being relatively new, it opens vast opportunities for future experiments”.
Today being a theatre lover is easy, even if you live a thousand miles away. Social media allows us to follow our favorite troupes from any place of the world. Our experts from Facebook’s theatre-themed community recommend paying special attention to several theatres that, in their opinion, are doing especially well when it comes to grabbing digital audiences’ attention.
Maly Theatre

The Maly Theatre claims to be “safeguarding the traditions of the acting craft and the Russian culture”; it is described as a place “where actors value every word that is said on-stage, while directors cherish and respect their literary sources”. The repertoire is based on Russian and foreign classics. The theatre actively shares its daily highlights on social media, in addition to streaming events that are relevant to its activities (creative get-togethers, exhibitions, and more). The Maly Theatre troupe notes that “working with digital formats is an excellent opportunity to pique the interest of the new, modern audience and make it pay attention”; as digital technology allows the theatre to present itself to the broadest swathes of public regardless of location and to find common ground with the younger generation, which tends to consume content digitally.

Kvartet I Theatre Company

The Kvartet I comedy theatre was founded by a group of Russian Institute of Theatre Arts (GITIS) alumni that studied at the variety theatre faculty: actors Leonid Baratz, Aleksandr Demidov, Kamil Larin, and Rostislav Khait, along with director Sergey Petreykov. Over the past years the company has established itself as one of the most upbeat theatres in Moscow, managing to work in the “pure humor” genre. The theatre’s creative work primarily targets young, socially active people. Members of the Kvartet I always write the script for their productions themselves, even when they base their shows on a literary source created by a different author; they also collaborate with other theatre, radio and television projects.
MOSCOW

Malaya Bronnaya Theatre

This is a theatre with an impressive history where Anatoly Efros, one of the main directors of the late Soviet era, created his best performances. The Malaya Bronnaya Theatre is currently among the top ten Moscow theatres by the number of visitors, and its art director, Konstantin Bogomolov, is considered one of modern Russia’s foremost directors. He aims to turn the theatre into a bourgeois space for a wide audience. It will still speak to the audience in a clear traditional theatre language, but at the same time will aspire to the highest standards of acting and directing.

MOSCOW

Praktika Theatre

Praktika is an experimental theatre led by Marina Brusnikina. It is one of the few theatres focused on the production of modern Russian plays. The theatre serves as a training base for workshops run by a variety of theatre colleges, allowing young performers to unleash their creative potential and work in tandem with the best directors and set designers. At the moment, Praktika houses the Dmitry Brusnikin workshop, the Oleg Kudryashov workshop, the Viktor Ryzhakov workshop, and Yury Makeyev’s Teatr Vkusa (Theatre of Taste).

MOSCOW

Theatre of Nations

The theatre’s current development stage began with the arrival of a new creative team, headed by art director Yevgeny Mironov, People’s Artist of Russia and winner of multiple State Awards. The Theatre of Nations does not have permanent staff in a company or creative team which allows them to involve qualified and famous artists from different theatres into productions. Its goal is to collaborate with international theatres and invite global celebrities to its stage. Their repertoire includes such outstanding directors as Robert Wilson, Robert Lepage and Alvis Hermanis, who are the main contributors to the development of the European theatre world. To a big extent this is possible due to Roman Dolzhansky, Yevgeny Mironov’s assistant and art director of two theatre festivals, NET and “Territory”.


MOSCOW

Teatr.doc

TEATR.DOC is a “documentary drama theatre” — an independent, non-profit, grassroots project. Most of TEATR. DOC’s productions are documentaries, based on real stories, interviews, and experiences of real people. Documentary theatre is a unique genre that crosses the line between art and social analysis of contemporary issues. The theatre’s creative groups stage productions on the most urgent, burning subjects of the day. Striving to build up a social media presence, the theatre also offers live streams of its one-time events.

ST. PETERSBURG

G. A. Tovstonogov Bolshoi Drama Theatre

The place always associated with academic, conservative and psychological aspects of a theatre opens its doors to a variety of new theatre formats — from visual and entertaining performances to social experiments with audience. Today BDT is an innovative theatre led by Andrey Moguchy, a director who was one of the first creators of a visual and entertaining theatre in Russia. Apart from working on productions, BDT also holds lectures and workshops and is committed to modern art (for example, the theatre’s team transformed a half of its historic building into a conceptual architecture project).

MOSCOW

The Meyerhold Center

The Meyerhold Center offers theatre companies an open platform and creators that follow the most diverse art movements use its convertible stage for cross-genre productions. Its Black Hall is an intimately small space for new drama and modern dance. The Kruzhki (Workshops) program lets the public experience the world of modern theatre first-hand. And the kids’ program features a collection of plays for the smallest theatregoers, staged by aspiring teams of young performers. The Meyerhold Center’s team intends to “entirely forgo all typography and switch to a purely digital format”.

hand. And the kids’ program features a collection of plays for the smallest theatregoers, staged by aspiring teams of young performers. The Meyerhold Center’s team intends to “entirely forgo all typography and switch to a purely digital format”.

hand. And the kids’ program features a collection of plays for the smallest theatregoers, staged by aspiring teams of young performers. The Meyerhold Center’s team intends to “entirely forgo all typography and switch to a purely digital format”.

hand. And the kids’ program features a collection of plays for the smallest theatregoers, staged by aspiring teams of young performers. The Meyerhold Center’s team intends to “entirely forgo all typography and switch to a purely digital format”.

hand. And the kids’ program features a collection of plays for the smallest theatregoers, staged by aspiring teams of young performers. The Meyerhold Center’s team intends to “entirely forgo all typography and switch to a purely digital format”.

hand. And the kids’ program features a collection of plays for the smallest theatregoers, staged by aspiring teams of young performers. The Meyerhold Center’s team intends to “entirely forgo all typography and switch to a purely digital format”.

hand. And the kids’ program features a collection of plays for the smallest theatregoers, staged by aspiring teams of young performers. The Meyerhold Center’s team intends to “entirely forgo all typography and switch to a purely digital format”.

hand. And the kids’ program features a collection of plays for the smallest theatregoers, staged by aspiring teams of young performers. The Meyerhold Center’s team intends to “entirely forgo all typography and switch to a purely digital format”.

hand. And the kids’ program features a collection of plays for the smallest theatregoers, staged by aspiring teams of young performers. The Meyerhold Center’s team intends to “entirely forgo all typography and switch to a purely digital format”.

hand. And the kids’ program features a collection of plays for the smallest theatregoers, staged by aspiring teams of young performers. The Meyerhold Center’s team intends to “entirely forgo all typography and switch to a purely digital format”.

hand. And the kids’ program features a collection of plays for the smallest theatregoers, staged by aspiring teams of young performers. The Meyerhold Center’s team intends to “entirely forgo all typography and switch to a purely digital format”.

hand. And the kids’ program features a collection of plays for the smallest theatregoers, staged by aspiring teams of young performers. The Meyerhold Center’s team intends to “entirely forgo all typography and switch to a purely digital format”.

hand. And the kids’ program features a collection of plays for the smallest theatregoers, staged by aspiring teams of young performers. The Meyerhold Center’s team intends to “entirely forgo all typography and switch to a purely digital format”.

hand. And the kids’ program features a collection of plays for the smallest theatregoers, staged by aspiring teams of young performers. The Meyerhold Center’s team intends to “entirely forgo all typography and switch to a purely digital format”.

hand. And the kids’ program features a collection of plays for the smallest theatregoers, staged by aspiring teams of young performers. The Meyerhold Center’s team intends to “entirely forgo all typography and switch to a purely digital format”.

hand. And the kids’ program features a collection of plays for the smallest theatregoers, staged by aspiring teams of young performers. The Meyerhold Center’s team intends to “entirely forgo all typography and switch to a purely digital format”.

hand. And the kids’ program features a collection of plays for the smallest theatregoers, staged by aspiring teams of young performers. The Meyerhold Center’s team intends to “entirely forgo all typography and switch to a purely digital format”.

hand. And the kids’ program features a collection of plays for the smallest theatregoers, staged by aspiring teams of young performers. The Meyerhold Center’s team intends to “entirely forgo all typography and switch to a purely digital format”.

hand. And the kids’ program features a collection of plays for the smallest theatregoers, staged by aspiring teams of young performers. The Meyerhold Center’s team intends to “entirely forgo all typography and switch to a purely digital format”.

hand. And the kids’ program features a collection of plays for the smallest theatregoers, staged by aspiring teams of young performers. The Meyerhold Center’s team intends to “entirely forgo all typography and switch to a purely digital format”.

hand. And the kids’ program features a collection of plays for the smallest theatregoers, staged by aspiring teams of young performers. The Meyerhold Center’s team intends to “entirely forgo all typography and switch to a purely digital format”.

hand. And the kids’ program features a collection of plays for the smallest theatregoers, staged by aspiring teams of young performers. The Meyerhold Center’s team intends to “entirely forgo all typography and switch to a purely digital format”.

hand. And the kids’ program features a collection of plays for the smallest theatregoers, staged by aspiring teams of young performers. The Meyerhold Center’s team intends to “entirely forgo all typography and switch to a purely digital format”.

hand. And the kids’ program features a collection of plays for the smallest theatregoers, staged by aspiring teams of young performers. The Meyerhold Center’s team intends to “entirely forgo all typography and switch to a purely digital format”.

hand. And the kids’ program features a collection of plays for the smallest theatregoers, staged by aspiring teams of young performers. The Meyerhold Center’s team intends to “entirely forgo all typography and switch to a purely digital format”.

hand. And the kids’ program features a collection of plays for the smallest theatregoers, staged by aspiring teams of young performers. The Meyerhold Center’s team intends to “entirely forgo all typography and switch to a purely digital format”.
Dmitry Brusnikin Workshop

The Dmitry Brusnikin Workshop evolved from a training course at the Moscow Art Theatre School. It was founded by Dmitry Brusnikin, outstanding actor from the Moscow Art Theatre, director, professor, Distinguished Artist of the Russian Federation, Distinguished Artistic Personality of the Russian Federation. This is a unique theatre experiment for Russia — Brusnikin was one of the first figures who invited directors to work with his students, taught students new theatre formats and prepared artists for a new theatre. The Masterskaya’s team is one of the few troupes brought up on new plays.

Mayakovsky Theatre

Today the Mayakovsky Theatre is an academic space carefully transformed by director Mindaugas Karbauskis. It strives to maintain a delicate balance between the traditions of Russian psychological drama and the global art trends, with their new forms and texts. The troupe works with a boundless variety of material, from classical playwrights’ plays to documentary productions, from European intellectualism to new drama, from dramatic epics to first plays staged by students.

Taganka Theatre

The Taganka Theatre is rich in history. This is here where the most prominent figures of Russian art — Lyubimov, Efros, Vysotsky, Smekhov, and many others — worked on their creations. In 2016, Irina Apeksimova stood at the theatre's helm setting a new development trajectory. With each passing year the theatre’s playbill gets expanded thanks to the addition of productions of up-and-coming new directors; the productions become more diverse as well (for instance, the Taganka Theatre is now showing a number of musicals) and feature more and more modern tech. For instance, in November 2019 the theatre launched the Taganka Metamorphoses creative lab; as part of the project the troupe presented the Screenlife show, which takes place in the physical and virtual reality at the same time.
ST. PETERSBURG

Post Theatre

The Post Theatre is an independent troupe that was founded by Dmitry Volkostrelov, alumnus of the Russian State Institute of Performing Arts, who rallied together a team of young actors whom he used to study with. The theatre works with modern playwrights out of principle; and in 2019 it put on a play based on a script that was randomly generated by a computer.

When commenting on the theatre’s name, Volkostrelov explains, “It is very important for us to see the micro and macro motions within the universe and ourselves today. And today, according to Baudrillard, we live in a post-orgy world, a world where anything that could have happened has happened already. That’s a given. Nothing can surprise us anymore. This is what post means. Where can we go if we have already arrived? Is it even true that life is motion, or maybe all we need is to stop? This is what we are dealing with: post-motion, post-stop, post-life, post-drama, post-theatre”.

ST. PETERSBURG

Masterskaya Theatre

The core members of the Masterskaya (Workshop) troupe are graduates of the acting and directing course at the Russian State Institute of Performing Arts. The Masterskaya lives and breathes Russian psychological theatre with the maximal focus on individuals, their actions and aspirations and an unwavering faith in humanity. The creators from the Masterskaya team do not shy away from experimenting with drama, visuals and different concepts.

ST. PETERSBURG

Pop-Up Theatre

The Pop-Up Theatre founded and led by Semyon Aleksandrovsky claims to be “a new type of independent theatre”: “We do not act inside a building out of principle; we use streets, bars, and fields as a backdrop for our productions; and soon enough, we will be introducing shows inside your smartphone. One way or another, we always work with documentary material, and almost always perform in a live environment”, Aleksandrovsky notes. The theatre works extensively with the audio format and plans launching audio projects and digital performances.
KAST Theatre

In Russian, the theatre’s name is actually an acronym that stands for a Team of Modern Theatre Actors. The team was assembled in 2016 when working on the Lone Apostle show. It is also a play on jewelry casting. The troupe believes that together, these two meanings form the most accurate reflection of its approach to its “work, material, and the public”, and that they highlight the “value, beauty, and deep meaning” of the theatre’s production. The KAST Theatre refers to social media as “the shortest direct-to-consumer path”; it says that social networking, just as other digital platforms, can help “take theatre to places where it cannot be taken physically”. The troupe uses social media not just for chatting with their audiences but also for occasional livestreams of their rehearsals. The director, Aleksandr Minin, also curates a Facebook community, The Independent Theatres of Moscow, where he talks about the independent theatre companies across the Russian capital.

18+ Theatre

The 18+ Theatre is a modern drama venue that helps its audiences learn more about contemporary texts, the new theatre technology, and relevant theatre events overall; it works in close collaboration with the local art community (artists and musicians). According to its own mission statement, the theatre targets “progressive audiences that are ready to see experiments with form and action; after all, the 18+ Theatre is the only place in the city where you can see a play that will take you on a journey along the streets of old Rostov, or experience a horror show inside an old warehouse, or see both yourself and your boss in a different show’s characters, or step onto the stage beside the protagonist”.

Gogol Center

Gogol Center is a theatre project headed by Kirill Serebrennikov. The Gogol Center team calls itself a “city within a theatre” and a “land of freedom”. This is a unique space where all types of modern art coexist side by side; aside from productions by
Russian and European directors, the public can also attend film screenings, lectures, debates, concerts, and exhibitions. Gogol center runs its own YouTube channel which serves in essence as their own media outlet.

MOSCOW

The Center for Playwriting and Directing Theatre

The CDR (Center for Playwriting and Directing) Theatre was founded for the purpose of helping young directors and playwrights flesh out the ideas that occur to them during their creative search. Striving to tell the broadest audience possible about their work, the members of the CDR team actively engage with the public in social media, in addition to managing a separate Instagram account on behalf of a character from their School of Sleep show. The theatre also uses the digital space for livestreams of its one-time shows, readings, and concerts that are not part of its regular repertoire. The CDR notes that digital platforms play a key role in theatre development: it “gives creators and audiences an opportunity to find new means of engaging in a dialogue and becoming closer to one another”.

ST. PETERSBURG

Lev Erenburg’s Nebolshoi Drama Theatre

Even though its theatre studio bears the modest name Nebolshoi (literally Small), it is nonetheless a professional state establishment; and its director Lev Borisovich Erenburg used to study under none other than the great Georgy Tovstonogov (whose name has been immortalized by the Bolshoi Drama Theatre in St. Petersburg). The Nebolshoi Theatre’s social media community is offered not just useful information but educational content as well: the Theatre is running a series of videos where actors casually and humorously teach viewers some tips and tricks of their profession, and share secrets and hidden pitfalls.
The Bolshoi Theatre has always been one of the most symbolic paragons of Russian theatre art. It goes without saying that the core of its repertoire is made out of musical theatre masterpieces of the 19th and 20th century with the legendary Swan Lake serving as its indisputable calling card. But even though it is so
closely associated with historical productions the Bolshoi is far from stagnating: its playbill is constantly being supplemented with modern productions. The theatre is highly dedicated to a digital transformation of its activities; this includes actively working on a social media presence. In addition, it also curates Bolshoi Ballet on the Big Screen digital project, which allows international audiences to see HD relays of Bolshoi productions in various cinemas around the world; for Russian viewers, some relays are available for free in the comfort of their own home at media.bolshoi.ru.

Mariinsky Theatre

Mariinsky Theatre is one of Russia’s key theatre hubs. It was here where the development of Russian theatre began; and it was here where numerous masterpieces of music and opera saw the light of day for the first time. Over more than two centuries of history Mariinsky has graced the world with countless great singers and dancers: Feodor Chaliapin, Sofia Preobrazhenskaya, Anna Pavlova, Rudolf Nureyev and Mikhail Baryshnikov. Today the theatre also nurtures many astounding artists: music director Valery Gergiev, soprano Albina Shagimuratova and prima ballerina Diana Vishneva. Mariinsky productions often star world-class guest performers.

Stanislavsky Electrotheatre is a modern culture space that shapes its own philosophy and thus offers a new means of communication: an open dialogue with the audience. The theatre works in the field of drama and music alike, and is one of the leading venues for experimental music. Its stages are easily convertible and boast the latest technical equipment, which allows to put on shows of unmatched complexity levels. The team believes that “digital platforms bring the public closer”. Aside from the playbill and information about what’s on, Stanislavsky Electrotheatre’s social media pages also feature live streams of meetings with production crews, trailers of upcoming shows, video relays of lectures and seminars and longreads on the relevant subjects. Stanislavsky Electrotheatre even has its own Instagram masks, which it designs together with the Viva digital agency. The masks
are inspired by the makeup and costumes of characters from the theatre’s shows. The Stanislavsky Electrotheatre Instagram Stories include behind-the-scenes photos and videos that show how actors put on their makeup and what happens backstage during the show as well as feature questions to directors and actors. Furthermore, the theatre streams its shows live across various platforms. Its productions feature a wealth of technology; notably, the videos and set elements used in its Psychosis show, based on a play by Sarah Kane, were later adopted by the AES+F art group for its own independent VR project.

Perm Opera and Ballet Theatre

The Perm Opera and Ballet Theatre carries the name of P. I. Tchaikovsky and is one of Russia’s oldest music theatres. The construction of the building was initiated and funded by the local community. It was also the first regional theatre to go on tour to the Bolshoi in Moscow. From 2011 to 2019 the music direction of the Perm Opera and Ballet Theatre was handled by the renowned conductor Teodor Currentzis. The quality of the Perm Theatre’s ballet and opera productions is so high that whenever something new premieres, the entire city turns into a major music hub. During the Golden Mask Festival the Perm Theatre always gives many leading Russian theatres some serious competition.

KAZAN

Tatar State Opera and Ballet Theatre named after Musa Dzhalil

Tatar State Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre is one of the largest musical theatres in Russia that preserves the traditions of Russian, global and Tatar music culture. It underwent reconstruction in 2005 and today the staged performances are made complete with complex state-of-the-art set designs and lighting effects. The theatre annually hosts two large-scale international festivals: the opera festival dedicated to the signer Feodor Chaliapin, and the ballet festival, which bears the name of the world famous artist Rudolf Nureyev.
So, you have joined a new community and learned about the key trends in modern theatre, and then picked a place where the repertoire appeals to you the most. But what is next? Which show should you see? Our theatre experts from Facebook theatre groups recommend a few must-see productions that you cannot miss — or forget.

Feast Thine Eyes

Play “Old lady’s visit”, Maly theatre
Photo by: Maly theatre
**MOSCOW**

**Don Quixote**

*The Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Moscow Music Theatre*

This was the very first ballet by Rudolf Nureyev that was brought back to Russia; this alone makes the premiere a historical milestone. For the Western public Nureyev’s choreography has long since become a classic. In the show the Spanish passion is intertwined with the French refined elegance and the plotline structure is almost overloaded with new variations and inserted dances featuring male characters. Other features include voluminous new costumes and sets, a new interpretation of dance numbers that are based on character acting and a different orchestra arrangement for Minkus’ music. And brought together, all these novelties turn into a truly vibrant ballet epic, which all of us must see at least once in our lifetimes.

---

**Kaash**

*The Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Moscow Music Theatre*

Akram Khan is one of the most distinguished and sought-after modern dance choreographers. This premiere is a momentous occasion for the ballet world: among other things, this is the choreographer’s first time working with Russian dancers. Kaash (Hindi for “if only”) is Akram Khan’s first large-scale production that premiered in 2002. Following the complex rhythm of the tabla drums, two men and three women paint an epic cosmology through dance. The British choreographer with Bangladeshi roots was inspired by the imagery of the Hindu god Shiva. The performance blends together Asian martial arts, the classical kathak dance and contemporary dance, intermingled with meditative solos and trios that feature the intricate wrist gestures to typical of India. Premiere in Russia: June 12, 2020.

---

**Nureyev**

*Bolshoi Theatre*

The most striking premiere of 2017. The hype for this production was so strong that you could have thought it was a new superhero franchise rather than a ballet. This ballet biopic about the life of Rudolf Nureyev, an outrageously daring 20th century danseur, has earned a plethora of adjectives: scandalous, brilliant, divisive, innovative. The production team trio — choreographer Yury Posokhov, composer Ilya Demutsky and director Kirill Serebrennikov — was already well-known at the time. The creators of the Nureyev ballet decided to blend together several genres, which is why dance in the show is combined with elements of opera, oratorio, drama, TV shows and cinema.
**MOSCOW**

**Spartacus**

*Bolshoi Theatre*

First staged in the middle of the 20th century, Spartacus still remains highly popular in the 21st. Just as The Swan Lake it has become the Bolshoi’s trademark ballet. In this production the brilliant Russian choreographer Yury Grigorovich brought the male dancers into the spotlight; the scenes that feature the men’s corps de ballet make a lasting impression because of their sheer scale and intense emotion — and even the most jaded of theatregoers will be unable to remain indifferent to Aram Khachaturian’s music.

---

**ST. PETERSBURG**

**Daphnis et Chloé**

*Mariinsky Theatre*

Vladimir Varnava, a prominent young choreographer, was inspired to stage this ballet by the music of Maurice Ravel and the talent of the Mariinsky troupe. Unlike the eponymous work of literature, the ballet does not have a clear-cut narrative but it does touch upon one of the important themes: we humans are blessed with beautiful bodies that need exploring, and the characters are at the time of their life when they are trying to find out what their bodies can do. The choreographer himself describes this as “drama of the body”. He paints whole pictures out of human bodies, building the plot right out of the dancers’ poses, and head turns, and touches.
MOSCOW

The Nutcracker

Bolshoi Theatre

The world’s foremost Christmas ballet needs no special introduction. This classical show is based on an eponymous fairytale by Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann. Seeing The Nutcracker — at the Bolshoi in particular — has become a special winter tradition for ballet fans. For children this is an excellent opportunity to experience the magic of ballet; and for their parents it’s a chance to remember how they were young. Everything about this show is stunning, from the wonderfully familiar music by Tchaikovsky to the enchanting scenery and refined choreography.
ST. PETERSBURG

La Bayadère
Mariinsky Theatre

La Bayadère is one of the most popular classical heritage ballets. And St. Petersburg is the only place where you can truly witness how it should be performed. The Mariinsky Theatre has been working with a particular meticulousness to preserve all the traditions established by the great Marius Petipa. This ballet is a vast canvas where the core element is the timeless tale of star-crossed lovers: a noble Hindu warrior and a temple dancer. The exotic flair is in perfect synthesis with purest classics and the impossibly elaborate patterns of body language make it look like the ballet dancers have to pass a professional exam in choreography and acting every time they perform. The most beautiful part of the production and a cult classic is the scene with the shades, which seem to beckon the audience to come back to the theatre again and again.

PERM

Jeanne au Bûcher
Perm Opera and Ballet Theatre

The controversial opera by drama director Romeo Castellucci (Italy) and the renowned conductor Teodor Currentzis combines elements of performance and post-drama theatre. The first half an hour is not even an opera: the public sits in complete silence. The opera’s creators are not interested in any new facts about Joan of Arc. Instead, they bring forth striking imagery of war heroes, immigrants, and Holocaust victims, so its ending leaves a lot to think about. Maxim Drimling calls this opera “a theatrical masterpiece, plain and simple”.

MAKHACHKALA

Crimson Sails
The Dagestani State Puppet Theatre

Director and artist Viktor Nikonenko wrote a completely new story inspired by Aleksandr Grin’s eponymous story, astoundingly romantic and bittersweet. The social commentary on the hostile environment that the main character, Assol, grew up in, are subdued. The key focus is on the two lovers, who are both not-of-this-earth daydreamers that were lonely as children. The production’s visuals are captivating: there are the soaring arches of coastal towns and the enormous rippling “water” canvasses; but the main attraction is the puppets, both big (which fly above the set) and small (which appear in the buildings’ doorways).

Maxim Drimling: “There are some people who think that puppet theatre is boring. They think that puppet shows are lifeless, with no human emotion or energy — which is a load of nonsense. I used to agree until I saw this one puppet show, where I bawled my eyes out and would sometimes forget to breathe.”
**FEAST THINE EYES**

**GUIDE TO THEATRE LANDSCAPE IN RUSSIA**

- **MOSCOW**

  **Waiting for Godot**

  *Vakhtangov Theatre*

  Samuel Beckett’s “Waiting for Godot” tells a touching tale of vagrants who dwell on the very outskirts of life brought together by their shared fate, hopes, and aspirations. Comical slapstick is organically interwoven with tragedy, the mystical exists side by side with the real world, flesh-and-blood people turn into symbols and the abstract notion of time becomes tangible.

- **MOSCOW**

  **Little Red Riding Hood**

  *Taganka Theatre*

  This is an adult version of the fairytale with strong psychological undertones: a story about Mothers and Daughters, about coming of age, about love and loneliness. There is no Big Bad Wolf here; instead of a literal beast the characters fall prey to the dread of impending loss. The mothers are afraid of letting go of their children even as they grow up; and the children are afraid of losing their parents.

  *Maxim Drimling:* “When parents have a conflict with their kids, they don’t have to go to therapy straight away. I recommend seeing this show first. It will make many things become clear”.

- **ST. PETERSBURG**

  **Vakhtangov_Chekhov.docx**

  *The St. Petersburg City Theatre*

  Vakhtangov_Chekhov.docx is a show about the history of Russian theatre including the creation and development of Stanislavsky’s acting system, the fate of the First Studio opened by the Moscow Art Theatre and the friendship between Yevgeny Vakhtangov and Mikhail Chekhov. The young actors present this show as “playing” with historical documents, telling the story of their famous peers that lived a hundred years ago and aspired to build a new, vivacious kind of theatre.

  *Maxim Drimling:* “This is a unique show that documents how classical Russian theatre began to shape itself. Stanislavsky, Meyerhold, Chekhov — if these names make you feel bored, you are wrong. The play has real passion and humor!”

- **GROZNY**

  **Elder Son**

  *Russian Drama Theatre named after M. Lermontov*

  The production’s director Dmitry Pavlov explains that this show based on the eponymous play by A. Vampilov has everything that your heart desires: love, rivalry, treachery, disappointment, life-changing meetings and a father-son relationship, which is something so timeless that it makes the story almost Biblical.
Mom, Don’t Read This

Alejandro Valensio Theatre

The production is based on an eponymous VKontakte public community (in Russian: “Mum, nu ne tchitay!”), dedicated to sharing pictures of children’s diaries, questionnaire games, notes passed to classmates and secrets about first crushes. The actors pieced the diary fragments together and turned them into sincere and moving conversations.

Maxim Drimling: “It’s very touching, beautiful and refined”.

Kontora

Pavel Novikov’s ProZHekt Production Center

Kontora (Russian for “office”) is one of the first projects executed by the ProZHekt creative team. The beginning of the plot is mundane and simple: a group of office employees stays behind late in order to tackle some extra workload, but suddenly things take a completely surreal turn. The characters develop powers that they never would have thought themselves capable of and start seeing their colleagues in a completely new light.

Maxim Drimling: “This is a fiery show with excellent drive, a great example of high-quality comedy on a highly relevant topic. A must-see for everyone who works at an office or in a study”.

Life of W

The LadYes Theatre at the Bulgakov House

Maxim Drimling: “This incredible theatre is a two-lady show run by Olga Anichkova and Viktoria Mustafina. Hence the name Ladies — or LadYes. They work as an independent troupe, with some friendly help from the Bulgakov House. It’s an incredible pantomime that will have you laughing throughout. A simple story about two women’s life”.

Maxim Drimling: “It’s very touching, beautiful and refined”.

Maxim Drimling: “This is a fiery show with excellent drive, a great example of high-quality comedy on a highly relevant topic. A must-see for everyone who works at an office or in a study”.

Maxim Drimling: “This incredible theatre is a two-lady show run by Olga Anichkova and Viktoria Mustafina. Hence the name Ladies — or LadYes. They work as an independent troupe, with some friendly help from the Bulgakov House. It’s an incredible pantomime that will have you laughing throughout. A simple story about two women’s life”.

Maxim Drimling: “It’s very touching, beautiful and refined”.

Maxim Drimling: “This is a fiery show with excellent drive, a great example of high-quality comedy on a highly relevant topic. A must-see for everyone who works at an office or in a study”.

Maxim Drimling: “This incredible theatre is a two-lady show run by Olga Anichkova and Viktoria Mustafina. Hence the name Ladies — or LadYes. They work as an independent troupe, with some friendly help from the Bulgakov House. It’s an incredible pantomime that will have you laughing throughout. A simple story about two women’s life”.
Immersive shows that make the audience feel like it is part of the story have already won the public’s trust and even managed to become fashionable. Creative teams keep coming up with more and more new ways of immersing the audience in their productions. Some create audio shows, others turn their plays into choose-your-own-adventure games, where the viewer decides what happens next and others still do their directing on social media. In a mood for an experiment? Here are some noteworthy theatre projects recommended by our experts from the Facebook theatre communities.
Rock Tverskaya is a joint project by Facebook, Instagram and Mikhail Zygar’s Future History studio. This is the fifth such show available in the Mobile Theatre app. It documents the incredible surge of Russian rock during the 90s, when rock music became a true symbol of change in society and in the country. The production stars Mikhail Kozyrev and Musia Totibadze. Mikhail Kozyrev is a radio host and producer who witnessed and took part in some of the most important events in rock history. He was the one who got the Russian public acquainted with dozens of rock bands that are now considered cult classics. Musia Totibadze is a young musician; born in 1996, she obviously does not remember that era in history — but Mikhail’s stories help her, along with the audience, learn more. During the play, you can immerse yourself in the story even further thanks to the videos posted on Facebook and Instagram.
Rather than calling itself an independent theatre, the Zayachiyston (literally “Hare’s Moan”) build-a-show quartet prefers the title of a “dependent” project. And you don’t realize straight away what the dependency is on, exactly. Maybe it’s the addictive dance art they share on Instagram, parodying the tired old songs till they turn into absurdities and reenacting news stories through dance. Or their experimental shows at the Community bar and the Vakhtangov Theatre. Or their humorous prods at the phlegmatic body of the stagnant theatre world. The quartet bonded together spontaneously in a dressing room of the Lenkom Theatre back in 2015. As they were waiting for their cue, four actors — Vitalik Borovik, Maksim Amelchenko, Aleksey Polyakov and Kirill Petrov — decided to make a funny video. After one video, came another, and another. Can’t stop, won’t stop. Sometimes the quartet is visited by some of their most famous fans; this has resulted in Zayachiyston’s videos guest-starring Ravshana Kurkova, Maksim Vitorgan and Olga Shelest. Vitalik, Maksim, Aleksey, and Kirill plan to continue pushing the boundaries of humor and to create a new chaotic theatre on their Instagram.

Kirill Petrov, member of Zayachiyston: “It just so happened that our theatre trope was born on Instagram. You know how it goes, ‘In the beginning was the Word’. Well, in our case, in the beginning was Instagram. That was where we gathered a following, found our own special thing and our own special style. Later on we created our show, and are now working on another, so Zayachiyston’s Instagram turned into a tool for selling tickets and making our team more popular. We firmly believe that an Instagram theatre is a fairly interesting model that, apart from economic gain, also serves to educate a younger audience”.
**MOSCOW**

**Impresario**

Impresario is an independent theatre company run by Feodor Elutine. The team searches for interesting new theatre productions around the world and informs the Russian public about them. Working as an impresario, Feodor Elutine adapts some of the best works of contemporary European experimental drama specifically for Russian audiences. One of his projects is called Remote Moscow (run in collaboration with Rimini Protokoll group); it belongs to the highly relevant promenade production genre, combining elements of a theatre show, a sightseeing tour, a video game, and a quest. Rather than sit back in their chairs, the audience takes an active part in this audio promenade.

**Community stage**

Community Stage is an independent theatre that uses the premises of a modern library. It has deliberately rejected the traditional backdrop and stage, claiming to be a space for cultural communication without any visible boundaries. The repertoire includes documentary productions, storytelling, new theatre interpretations of classical and modern plays, ironic comedies, site-specific productions, immersive shows, puppet shows and experiments with poetry and music. “We are not daunted by working with different concepts or experimenting with different genres and forms, be it a bar show or a combo of acting and cooking. We believe that the theatre is, first and foremost, a new audience experience; rather than moralize and preach, the theatre should spark a discussion”.

**MOSCOW**

**The Mirror of Carlos Santos**

The Mirror of Carlos Santos lasts for an hour and a half. Staged by Talgat Batalov, who has multiple Golden Mask nominations, and based on a play by Anti-Booker winner Maksim Kurochkin, the performance takes place at the Mirror speakeasy theatre. This 1000 square-meter venue lies in the heart of Moscow, a few steps away from the Pushkin Square. Each performance is intended for a strictly limited audience of 12 people who share dinner and wine as part of the finale.

Kirill Petrov, member of the Zayachiy Ston build-a-show quartet: “I was really impressed by the headphone system, which switches audio tracks as you pass a certain checkpoint at this location. I had to do the same thing once for one of my projects, and it turns out that this is far from easy. Using headphones in theatre is really interesting in general, it’s like one of your senses gets shut off, and on the one hand, you feel outside your comfort zone, especially if you are being moved around at that moment, while on the other hand, it creates a really powerful immersion.”
chooses their own level of involvement in the show: they can sing at the microphone and leave messages in the chat, thus becoming a part of something creative or observe passively as the digital and the real worlds collide onstage, and analyze the text’s meaning in detail.

Nikita Slavich, director: “I suspect that people from Generation Z consider it an insult or even an infringement of their rights if they are asked to switch off their phones, not to make videos, or to dim their screens at the theatre. A digital transformation is inevitable, that much is obvious; so it would be ridiculous for experiments like DJ NIKISSA to ignore the vital virtual needs of the viewer, who is also our collaborator. Leave your digital detox for some other time as modern theatre is always a place where you are put under real pressure”.

DJ NIKISSA is both a theatre show and a party; a behavioral experiment and a digital performance. It is based on a retrospective analysis of the essence of modern Russia’s music, including musings on the Internet. 30 popular songs, 15 years of history, 1 chat room and 300 anonymous comments. After joining a shared chat the audience sits down facing an empty stage with a screen and a lonesome microphone. The performer acts both as a DJ and a chat admin weaving the audience’s improvisations into the production’s text in the chat. Each audience member

Download DJ NIKISSA.

Photo by: Anastasia Dubinnikova
Nikita Slavich, director: “The Lean Against project reveals a different side of the digital era. The show is about the ways in which modern digital technology and devices can not only bring the world closer to us, but also allow us to look deep within ourselves and gain a more poignant sense of how connected we are to our loved ones and the people who live in the same city. In the future we are planning to take the show to an app or a website, so that everyone who own noise-suppressing headphones could arrange their own journey with even more freedom”.

---

PRISLONYATSYA (Literally “Lean Against”, a play on notices in Russian metro trains urging passengers not to lean against the doors) is a personalized media performance, where the train cars and platforms turn into a stage set, the city and its underground gain voices of their own and the passengers become actors. What seems like a routine underground ride turns into a spectacular journey. As they travel across all this space, members of the audience will try to measure the real distance between themselves, so very different and yet so very close, sharing the same city. This performance in metro trains became a truly extraordinary event for Samara: the very first site-specific show, and the very first experience of introducing the latest immersive practices city-wide.

---

The Portrait audio show was created to celebrate the 110th founding anniversary of the Theatre Museum in St. Petersburg. By relying on modern theatre practices, the team behind the show crafted a special audio filter that allows the public to see the museum as a living, breathing being. The visitors will take a closer look at the nature of things that transpired within the museum’s walls — not all of them obvious at first glance — which will enable them to paint their own portrait of this place. Stories told by the museum’s employees intertwine with the personal reminiscences of its founder, the infamous art patron and collector Levky Zheverzheev voiced by actor Dmitry Lysenkov.
Even though the perfobufet company based in St. Petersburg, the show takes place inside a car with a registration plate issued in Omsk, which is also where all the actors come from (hence the title). Each show is meant to be watched by one person: from the car’s passenger seat they do not just learn something new about this Siberian city but also become a character in their own right. One week before the car trip this person is issued a script: their goal is to create their own backstory as a person born and living in Omsk. Aside from the four actors in the car, some other actors (also originally from Omsk) take part in the show by phone.

Artyom Tomilov, lead concept maker at perfobufet: “Many of our projects use digital technology as screenplay elements. For example, several of our shows begin with email conversations, which are not just a set of instructions but an actual process of involving the audience in the show. And other performances are hidden away from the general public; instead, we post parts of them online creating a sort of ‘long-distance theatre’.”
Jinn is a digital opera where the action is happening all at once in several parts of the city. Throughout the day the actors move across Moscow along different routes, and the audience is free to choose whether to go search for them or follow their progress through Facebook. The script has been inspired by three fundamentally different creators: Roland Barthes, Kazimir Malevich and Nick Bostrom. The actors and the audience spend the entire performance on two planes: the real and the digital. The theatre script reflects Facebook and Instagram profiles and the information that the performers share on those profiles shapes their onstage character. You can never tell for certain where the show is going to end. It could happen in our physical world or it could happen online.

Andrey Zhiganov, director: “It is commonly assumed that the presence of the audience is what justifies the theatre’s existence, and we scarcely ever talk about theatre that looks back at the audience. I believe that digital platforms are capable of creating a new space for performance projects that speak a whole new language. The online space is truly unique here, in that it makes imposing copyright, total censorship and creative limitations impossible. Modern technology is a dynamic, untamable environment, which doubtlessly serves as a constant reflection of our physical reality”.

In May 2019 Yury Sorokin, Director at the Transformator Center, created an “anti-play” called i, which documented experiences unique to Instagram. As soon as a user views the virtual character’s profile, they become a spectator of a show. A show that lasts for as long as you are in a place that cannot enter physically. i is one year from the life of a real man, which he has documented himself. It is made out of brief snatches of Instagram Stories that fit together into the days of his life. Throughout the play the director asks the audience, “Do you find this person interesting? What have you learned about him? What do you want to learn? Have you already learned enough about certain things? Why are you here?”. As a result, each audience member ends up with their own unique show that they can return to throughout the year.
Theatre festivals are the perfect option for those who want to experience several theatre projects all at once. They offer a unique opportunity to meet creative teams from all over Russia and the world, enjoy seeing familiar shows all over again and find something entirely new. Our theatre experts from Facebook invite you to dive into this special world.
Golden Mask Festival

The Golden Mask is a national theatre award in Russia covering all genres. Over the span of a year, the expert judging panel watches several hundred productions across the entire country; in spring the shows that were nominated for the award are brought to the festival in Moscow, which gives the audience an excellent opportunity to see the best of domestic theatre in a single city. Apart from the festival proper and the award ceremony, which takes place in the capital, the Golden Mask also arranges tours of nominated shows to different Russian regions.

NET Festival

The NET (New European Theatre) festival offers a unique vision of today’s theatre space. The program is very diverse, including both innovative interpretations of classical drama and multimedia performances staged by the best directors of European theatre’s new wave. The main purpose of the festival is to get the Moscow public better acquainted with modern art.

Chekhov Festival

The Chekhov Festival is the oldest international festival in Russia, which introduced international theatres to the Russian public and professional audience. It focuses on a spectacular entertainment with the motto “theatre for everyone”, aiming to make the theatre a universally accessible art form.

“And, of course, it is very important for the theatre community that the Chekhov Festival is professionally engaging, so that they feel a part of the global theatre process.”
Territory Fest proclaims itself both an international festival and a modern art school, which also focuses on dance. Students of theatre and art colleges from Russia and the former USSR become the festival’s key audience and performers on an annual basis.

“Territory Fest is, first and foremost, a school”, the organizers explain. “Our event is meant for people who care, who are curious, who are ready to make creative discoveries and have a poignant and unexpected experience”.

Lubimovka Festival

The Lubimovka Festival features an annual selection of new plays by both aspiring and well-established Russian-speaking authors. The shortlisted plays are presented to theatre professionals and the general public during director readings. After each reading the festival hosts encourage the authors, theatre experts and the audience to discuss the play.

Ploschadka 8/3

Ploschadka 8/3 (the 8/3 Space) is the headquarters of the Union of the Independent Theatres of Russia that opened its doors in October 2019. The project team compares this space to a food court where the audience can “sample” various types of theatre. It hosts 11 troupes including the Liquid Theatre, Russia’s first site-specific theatre, which started performing in factories and railway station buildings back in the early 2000s, before it became mainstream; the 18+ Theatre, the first independent modern drama venue in Rostov-on-Don, which now intends to make tours to Moscow; and the Lubimovka Young Russian Playwrights Festival, which turns 30 this year and has focused on supporting the new generations of playwrights throughout its history.
Personal Behind-the-Scenes Accounts

Actors, ballet dancers, directors, conductors — all of these amazing people act like the face of their theatres and enjoy the well-deserved love of thousands. They also run social media accounts, where they reveal some of the backstage secrets (sometimes even production spoilers!) and show the side of theatre that the audience has never seen before. Our theatre experts from Facebook communities recommend taking a closer look at the accounts of several prominent theatre personalities if you want to find out what a performer’s daily life is like.

MARIA KHOREVA
First soloist at the Mariinsky ballet
@marachok

BORIS DERGACHYOV
Actor at the Stanislavsky Electrotheatre
@derbboris

ANNA TIKHOMIROVA
First soloist at the Bolshoi ballet
@annatikhomirova_official

HIBLA GERZMAVA
Principal soloist at the Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Moscow Music Theatre, People’s Artist of the Russian Federation
@hiblagerzmava

VLADISLAV LANTRATOV
Principal at the Bolshoi ballet, Distinguished Artist of the Russian Federation, winner of the Golden Mask Award
@vladislavlantratov

DMITRY LYSENKO
Theatre and film actor, winner of multiple government awards, the Golden Mask Award, and the St. Petersburg City Council Award
@lysenkovdima
GUIDE TO THEATRE LANDSCAPE IN RUSSIA

PERSONAL BEHIND-THE-SCENES ACCOUNTS

IRINA APEKSIMOVA
Actor, director of the Taganka Theatre

NIKOLAY KOLYADA
Actor, prose writer, playwright, screenwriter, theatre director, Distinguished Artistic Personality of the Russian Federation, winner of the K. S. Stanislavsky International Award

PAVEL RUDNEV
Theatre critic, art manager, special project assistant rector at the Moscow Art Theatre School

SASHA DENISOVA
Playwright, director, prose writer, chief playwright at the Meyerhold Center

VALERY PECHEYKIN
Playwright, screenwriter, journalist, Gogol Center creator

THE FLYING CRITIC COMMUNITY
This resource was created by theatre critics Oksana Kushlyaeva and Tatyana Dzhurova, who regularly visit regional theatres, attend premieres all across Russia and record their experience in a digital diary.

Educational Resources
Want to know even more about the world of theatre? Check out some of the educational resources recommended by Facebook’s theatre groups.
SCHOOL FOR THE CONTEMPORARY VIEWER AND LISTENER, STANISLAVSKY ELECTROTHEATRE, MOSCOW
The project runs from a lecture hall in the theatre’s foyer. The community publishes lectures, engages in debates and talks about the theatre’s events.

TASS PROJECT
This is a virtual 360° tour around theatres of Russia — the very first one (Drama Theatre named after F. Volkov, Yaroslavl), the most aristocratic one (Alexandinsky Theatre, Saint Petersburg) and the largest one (Novosibirsk Opera and Ballet Theatre).

THE SUFLER (PROMPTER) THEATRE APP
The Prompter is a free app that helps users make sense of Moscow’s playbills. It suggests which shows to watch, using information about which productions the user found especially memorable in the past, and helps buy the best tickets before they are sold out.

THE THEATRE TO GO MAGAZINE’S OFFICIAL BLOG
An online magazine for readers who want to know all there is to know about theatre. It publishes the latest news, reviews and interviews.

THE SDVIG PERFORMANCE VENUE, ST. PETERSBURG
The Sdvig (Shift) studio of performing arts is a small venue that is located in St. Petersburg and is currently run by a team of four artists. It offers physical practice — yoga and modern dance — in addition to a variety of workshops, lectures and concerts. The main purpose of the project is to educate people on dance and performance, which often turns the venue into an experimental hub.

We hope that you have enjoyed your journey as much as we enjoyed hanging out with the theatre community!
A Guide to the Theatre Landscape
in Russia 2019

Facebook — organizer of the campaign Theatre Going Digital
dedicated to the Year of Theatre

Text written, materials and information collected and edited
by: Liana Faizova, Inna Bulycheva

Photographs: Anton Voronkov, Vladislav Stepanenko

Design and layout: Marina Saitova

Illustrator: Alexander Zavisha

PBN Hill+Knowlton Strategies

Printed by: Vpechat

More information: cityguides.fb.com
Opera “Mermaid”, Bolshoi Theatre.
Photo by: Damir Yusupov