



# Newsletter

## Events

The ballet “Raymonda” to the music by Alexander Glazunov and choreographed by Yuri Grigorovich (2003 version) was back on the Bolshoi Theatre Historic Stage on December 15th, 16th and 17th. Yuri Grigorovich revived this late masterpiece by Marius Petipa in Moscow in 1984, having marked the 20th anniversary of his career at the Bolshoi Theatre with this production. At that time the choreographer wrote his own libretto, based on the novel by L. Pashkova and medieval legends; however, he preserved the best pieces choreographed by Petipa and Gorsky. In recent years the production has been performed on the Bolshoi New Stage; however, there is no doubt that the scale of the ballet itself, together with the set, designed by Simon Virsaladze, demanded that the performance take place on the Main Stage. The return of “Raymonda” this season also marks the coming anniversary of the great master, who will be 90 years old on January 2nd. The opening night cast starred Olga Smirnova as Raymonda, Semyon Chudin as Jean de Brienne and Denis Savin as Abderakhman.



Raymonda dream scene. Anna Nikulina as Raymonda. Photo courtesy: D. Yusupov

On other nights the cast stars Anna Nikulina, Ekaterina Krysanova and Yulia Stepanova as Raymonda, Klim Efimov, Ar-

tem Ovcharenko and Denis Rodkin as Jean de Brienne, Igor Tsvirko and Ivan Vasiliev as Abderakhman.

For many of the dancers, including Semyon Chudin, Yulia Stepanova Igor Tsvirko and Klim Efimov, this is their debut in the leading roles.

More information about the casts and the production itself is available [here](#).

Music Director – Pavel Sorokin.

The final performances of the opera “**Rodelinda**” by Georg Friedrich Händel on the Bolshoi New Stage took place on December 13th, 15th, 17th and 19th.

In accordance with the contract, the co-production with the English National Opera that was first performed at the Bolshoi exactly a year ago, on December 13th 2015, is returning to the London stage. All performances of the final series starred the same cast, who specialise in baroque music, except for the part of Bertarido, performed not by David Daniels, but by Gerald Thompson.

Rodelinda – Dina Kuznetsova, Grimoaldo – Paul Nilon, Eduige – Ruxandra Donose, Garibaldo – Richard Burkhard, Unulfo – William Towers. The “silent” part of Flavio, son of Rodelinda and Bertarido, was performed by Matt Casey. The music director – Christopher Moulds, who is famous in Moscow as a baroque conductor. This is his third project at the Bolshoi Theatre after “Don Giovanni” and “The Magic Flute” by Mozart.

Stage Director: Richard Jones. Revival Director: Donna Stirrup. Set Designer: Jeremy Herbert. Costume Designer: Nicky Gillibrand. Lighting Designer: Mimi Jordan Sherin.



Paul Nilon as Grimoaldo, Richard Burkhard as Garibaldo  
Photo courtesy: D. Yusupov

A gala-concert of opera soloists took place at the S.V. Rachmaninoff concert hall on December 15th as a part of the Bolshoi Theatre season at **“Philharmonia-2”**. The Bolshoi's young soloists performed arias and duets from operas by Mozart, Thomas, Bizet, Gounod, Verdi, Rimsky-Korsakov, Dargomyzhsky, Tchaikovsky and Shostakovich. They performed to the accompaniment of the Bolshoi Theatre orchestra, conducted by Pavel Klinichev. The concert starred Olga Kulchinskaya (soprano), Ekaterina Morozova (soprano), Olga Seliverstova (soprano), Ruslana Koval (soprano), Anastasia Barun (soprano), Anna Bondarevskaya (mezzo-soprano), Yulia Mazurova (mezzo-soprano), Taras Prisyazhnyuk and Pavel Valuzhin (tenors), Dmitry Mytsy (tenor), Vadim Babichuk (tenor), Alexander Kireev (baritone), Ilya Kutuyukhin (baritone), Andrei Kimach (baritone) and Oleg Tsybulko (bass). Ekaterina Vasheruk was concert master.



On December 7th and 10th the cast of the opera **“Don Carlo”** by Verdi, was performed at the Bolshoi Theatre, starring outstanding singers: Ildar Abdrazakov as Philip II, the King of Spain, Hibla Gerzmava as Elisabeth of Valois and Ekaterina Gubanova as Princess Eboli. Conductor – Keri-Lynn Wilson. On December 6th, 8th and 11th the cast starred Dmitry Ulyanov as Philip II, Elena Evseeva as Elisabeth of Valois and Agunda Kulaeva as Princess Eboli.



The cast and the Bolshoi management after the performance of “Don Carlo” on December 10th 2016

The Bolshoi Theatre Chamber Orchestra Concert **“Metamorphoses of Myths”** took place at the Beethoven Hall on December 11th.

Conductor – Mikhail Tsinman. The programme of the first part of the concert included pieces by Claude Debussy, Ottorino Respighi and Manuel de Falla. After the intermission the musicians performed a fragment from the opera “Orphée et Eurydice” by Christoph Willibald Gluck, starring Olga Kulchinskaya as Eurydice, Yaroslav Abaimov as Orphée and Vasilisa Berzhanskaya as Amour. The orchestra also performed pieces by Ludwig van Beethoven and Benjamin Britten.

The Bolshoi Ballet artistic director Makhar Vaziev announced in his interview with **RIA Novosti**, that in 2018 the Bolshoi Theatre is going to celebrate the anniversary of the renowned 19th century ballet master Marius Petipa. In November 2015 the government of Russia approved the arrangements for organising the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the ballet master and the theatre luminary Marius Petipa in 2018.

Mr. Vaziev said: “The year of 2018 is the anniversary year of Petipa. March 11th will be his 200th anniversary. Naturally, the Bolshoi Theatre is going to celebrate this date. We understand that the Mariinsky in Saint Petersburg was the real home of Petipa; this was the place where he spent the biggest part of his life. However, it is not possible to imagine the Bolshoi Theatre and Moscow without his works. The scale of this person’s talent made an impact on the ballet world as a whole”.

The gala-concert, marking the **80th anniversary of Maris Liepa** (1936-1989), one of the brightest dancers of the Bolshoi Ballet “golden age”, is taking place on the Bolshoi Historic Stage on December 20th 2016. The gala is organised by the Bolshoi Theatre in cooperation with the Maris Liepa Charitable Foundation. An exhibition, featuring the creative career of the great dancer, will be organised in the foyer. He was an icon of 20th century ballet. He embodied the fame and the greatness of the Bolshoi Ballet “golden age”, which is now already a legend, breathtaking personal successes and brilliant victories, gained on the best stages around the world, great achievements and complicated ups and downs on the way to the creative Olympus. Maris Liepa had the character of a conqueror; he conquered hearts, cities and countries. He was a dancer, a pedagogue, a restorer of ancient choreography, an author of memoirs, a film actor and a father, who managed to share his fanatical love for ballet with his children, Ilze and Andris. He was strong, manly, handsome and gifted; he loved ballet and could not imagine his life without it. The programme of the gala-concert includes fragments of ballets from Maris Liepa’s repertoire; the event stars leading soloists of the Bolshoi and the Mariinsky theatres, the Mikhailovsky Theatre, Teatro La Scala and the Royal Ballet.



On December 21st tribute to the People's Artist of the USSR [Makvala Kasrashvili](#) will be paid at the Bolshoi Theatre Beethoven Hall. She is an amazing soprano, who possesses a voice of rare beauty; her repertoire is vast, and she is an extremely charming person, who also demonstrates the sort of kindness which is quite rare nowadays. The concert "Makvala Kasrashvili and friends" is going to star not only the famous diva, but also her colleagues and partners – Olga Kulchinskaya, Svetlana Shilova, Oleg Kulko and Igor Golovatenko. The programme is going to include pieces by Sviridov, Rachmaninoff, Tchaikovsky, Verdi, Ravel, Mascagni, and others. The concert is also going to star the Bolshoi Theatre Orchestra Sextet: Kirill Filatov (violin), Roman Denisov (violin), Dmitri Bezinski (viola), Vyacheslav Chukhnov (cello), Kirill Nosenko (contrabass) and Alla Basargina (piano).

Performances of the ballet "[The Nutcracker](#)" resume at the Bolshoi Theatre on December 23rd. The ballet will be performed 25 times until January 8th. On December 18th the recording of the ballet was broadcast at the cinemas across Russia and around the world. Choreography – Yuri Grigorovich, designer – Simon Virsaladze. Starring Denis Rodkin and Anna Nikulina.



Grekomania reports: the Bolshoi Theatre Museum is bringing the exhibition "[The Magical World of the Bolshoi Theatre](#)" to Athens. This is the first time in its history that the famous Russian theatre is going to exhibit its costumes that great artists wore along with models of sets and props used in performances, in Greece. The exhibition features unique and impressive objects, including the costume of the famous Maya Plisetskaya from the film-ballet "Anna Karenina" and the pointe shoes of Ekaterina Maximova from "The Nutcracker" with the autograph of the famous dancers; it is open December 19th – February 12th and the Megaro Moussikis exhibition hall. The official opening took place on December 19th; the exhibition is open to the general public from December 20th till February

12th. The exposition is going to be closed on December 24th and 31st, as well as January 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 6th.

This season the anniversary of [Yuri Grigorovich](#) is to be celebrated at the Bolshoi Theatre on a grand scale. Not only the festival, named after him, but also a large-scale exhibition that will open at the Historic Stage Foyer on December 28th 2016 are going to be devoted to his creative works. The exhibition will feature unique objects, sketches, documents, costumes and photographs from the Bolshoi Theatre Museum collection and the master's personal archives.

The exhibition "The Era of Grigorovich", marking the 90th anniversary of an outstanding ballet master and People's Artist of the USSR Yuri Grigorovich opens on December 27th 2016 at the main building of A.A. Bakhrushin State Central Theatre Museum.

"Era of Grigorovich" is the 70-year long story, from the part of a young lad in "The Fountain of Bakhchisarai" / The Leningrad Kirov Opera and Ballet Theatre, 1946/ and the choreographer of the ballet "Young Stork/ Friendly Hearts" / Children's Studio of A.M. Gorky House of Culture, Leningrad, 1947/ to the legendary "The Tale of the Stone Flower" and "A Legend of Love", followed by productions staged at the leading theatres of Russia, Europe and Asia, as well as leading his own companies.

"Era of Grigorovich" is not only about theatres, but also about people. A part of exhibition is dedicated to the brilliant theatre designer Simon Virsaladze /1908 – 1989/, who was the co-author of Grigorovich's ballets for many years. The exposition features his sketches of sets and costumes for ballets choreographed by Grigorovich. They convey the poetic nature of those productions, their internal rhythm and volume, the flame of passion and the integrity of the original idea.

Another part of the exhibition "Era of Grigorovich" is dedicated to Natalia Bessmertnova, Grigorovich's wife and muse, who unfortunately passed away in 2008. The choreographer used to say he staged his productions not for his wife, but for the outstanding ballerina Bessmertnova.

## Press analysis:

Russian mass media

Russian mass media continue to publish reviews for the opera "Billy Budd" by Benjamin Britten, staged by David Alden and performed on the Bolshoi Theatre New Stage.

The newspaper [“Culture”](#) publishes an article titled “The Curious Case of Benjamin Britten”.

The journalist Alexander Matusevich writes about differences between “Rodelinda” and “Billy Budd” (both operas are co-productions with the English National Opera). “In the case of the first opera, the Bolshoi’s contribution was limited to the orchestra, which was rather strengthened with the help of guest musicians and the hall, since the production did not star a single soloist of the Bolshoi. When it comes to the opera by Britten, the role of Russian vocalists is substantial. Supporting roles, which still are important, are performed by Bogdan Volkov, Marat Gali, Oleg Tsybulko, Stanislav Mostovoy, Alexander Miminoshvili, Nikolai Kazansky and Arseny Yakovlev. The choir, or its male part, to be exact, the chorus master Valery Borisov and the Bolshoi orchestra are fully engaged in this production; the British maestro William Lacey is doing a great job as well”.

Vladimir Zisman, the author of the review published by [“Revizor. Ru”](#), considers that the production of the opera “Billy Budd” by Benjamin Britten has proved the Bolshoi’s status in the international operatic and cultural arena once again.

The reviewer asks himself the questions: “What did the author want to say, what did he manage to say, what did we see and what did we manage to understand?”. He speaks highly of the musical component of the production: “Billy Budd” is very difficult music to perform for the orchestra. The orchestra is huge, but the opera consists of a great number of the most sophisticated chamber episodes and solos incorporated into the vocal score. The solos were performed by the Bolshoi Theatre’s brilliant musicians Pyotr Kondrashin (cello), Artur Arzumanov (a long French horn solo in the duet of Vere and Budd), Elizaveta Simonenko (harp) and Anton Skiba, who performed a fantastically academic and delicate saxophone solo. The conductor William Lacey created this huge harmonious canvas that has internal movement, drama and a sea epic”.



Alexander Miminoshvili as Donald,  
Iurii Samoilov as Billy Budd, Robert Lloyd as Dansker,  
Marat Gali as Red Whiskers. Photo courtesy: Damir Yusupov

The magazine [“Music Seasons”](#) publishes the review by Sergei Biryukov. “The Bolshoi Theatre has finally got its hands on Benjamin Britten. Not only has it got its hands on him, but it has also staged a production that is powerful and integral, that is striking the right chord and lingers in one’s memory, even though some other impressions may overlap. The most respected specialists consider “Billy Budd” to be the greatest of all music dramas by the great British composer”. //

“As David Alden was working on this tough, dramatic and epic production – fresco, he did not leave out Russian traditions. According to the conductor William Lacey, as the production team was preparing to work on the project, they watched the film “Battleship Potemkin” by Sergei Eisenstein. The influence of the legendary film by the Soviet director can be seen in the geometric style of the movement, the powerful rhythms of the sailors’ groups movements, the skillful change of “close-ups” (chamber episodes) and generalised, ritual actions, such as the episode of the canon attack. Similarly, in this opera, this people’s drama, where the role of the choirs is enormous, one can hear the influence of Shostakovich and perhaps even Mussorgsky”.

Maya Krylova (the portal [“Teatral”](#)) writes about successful and sought-after opera stage directors, whose productions have recently been seen or which can be seen in Moscow in the near future. The list of the theatre critic includes stage directors whose works are performed on the Bolshoi Theatre New Stage: Floris Visser and his production “Così Fan Tutte” (Bolshoi Theatre, December 22nd – 25th), Richard Jones and his “Rodelinda” (December 13th, 17th and 19th), Dmitri Tcherniakov and his “Eugene Onegin” (January 19th – 24th 2017) and Evgeny Pisarev with his “Le Nozze di Figaro” (January 11th – 15th 2017).



Floris Visser

The large interview of the Bolshoi Ballet artistic director Makhar Vaziev with the news agency RIA has become the focus of attention for Russian mass media. The agency itself presented three separate news stories: one of them is about [celebrating the year of Petipa](#), the second one – about [guest choreographers](#) whose productions are planned to be staged at the Bolshoi in the coming seasons and the third one – about [inviting foreign soloists](#) to take part in the Bolshoi's production. All reports have been republished by numerous news sources. The full text of the interview is available on [RIA website](#).

“I do not consider that today we need some additional resources, or that we need to invite foreign soloists. When it comes to a particular creative project, we will sometimes invite soloists, just like it is done in all companies around the world. But this does not mean we are in need. The Bolshoi Theatre is a self-sufficient company, firstly, thanks to our school, the Bolshoi Ballet Academy. Ninety-five percent of our dancers are Academy graduates. This makes a lot of sense; this is induced by our repertoire, where the necessity to have one school and one style is very great”.

“Atmosphere is very important, but it does not appear by itself; atmosphere is created by people. We need to have a clear understanding of the following: the creative atmosphere appears only in the case when you give everyone a chance to show what they are capable of, and when this is not only something we talk about, but something we actually do. This is a very important part of the working process for me. Almost from the very first day I have been granting everyone chances to show me what they have been working on. At first I used to do it daily. But since it has turned out it was impossible to carry on with such rhythm, I have made a different decision. This is how it is organised now: two Sundays a month I am ready to take a look at what dancers and pedagogues have been working on. If it is interesting and convincing, there is a high chance they will be dancing it. We do not have enough rooms and time, but, as a result, we are making numerous discoveries. I am happy to admit that several discoveries have already been made, and I am sure there are more of them to come”.

“We have planned not only the current and the coming season; we are already working on the season 2019-20. I cannot name particular projects, since we have the tradition to announce our plans at the closing press conference in the end of the season. But I would like to say that planning is a very complicated process. We have to keep in mind many factors. First of all, we have two stages, the Historic Stage and the New Stage, which are not the same in terms of size. The price policy is different as well. Secondly, our repertoire is huge: there are 12 productions on the main stage, and 12 on the New Stage. We are not able to perform some of them every year. Thirdly, how do we combine classical productions and modern choreography, I mean, what

is the proportion? Classical ballet is our legacy, we take pride in it. It was the classical repertoire that nurtured new stars and bright corps de ballet ensembles at the Bolshoi. How do we save it in the future? This is not an idle inquiry. In my opinion, this proportion should be as follows: 70% of classical productions and 30 % of modern works. Otherwise I do not see how it is possible to achieve impressive results and to maintain the level that has been achieved by our predecessors. In order to be good at performing classical repertoire, one has to dance it all the time”.

Laureates of the only People's Choice Award in Russia “The Star of Teatral” were announced on Monday, December 5th, at the Moscow Academic Vakhtangov Theatre. [TASS](#) reports about the winners.

“[Teatral](#)” reports: the award in the category “Favourite Theatre/Best Director” was given to the Bolshoi Theatre General Director Vladimir Urin.



Vladimir Urin

“First of all, I have to say that this award goes to the wonderful team of the Bolshoi Theatre. No matter what happens there, no matter what storms it has to go through, this theatre has existed, it still exists today and it will continue to exist. Of course, I express my most sincere gratitude to all those who voted in my favour. And there is one more thing! I would have never become the director but for the woman that is sitting next to me. When I was invited to the music theatre, it was my wife that told me: “Give it a try”. It was more than 20 years ago..But she did not just say it, she has always been helping me”, – said Urin.

The awards were given out for the ninth time. What makes “The Star of Teatral” different, is the fact that not professional critics, but the regular audience choose the laureates of the previous theatre season. They go to the award's internet page ([www.teatral-online.ru/star](http://www.teatral-online.ru/star)) and vote on-line.



Olga Svistunova ([TASS](#)) reports, that the Bolshoi Theatre presented a whole galaxy of famous debuts in the opera “Don Carlo” by Giuseppe Verdi. These were Ildar Abdrazakov as Philip II, the King of Spain, Hibla Gerzmava as Elisabeth of Valois and Ekaterina Gubanova as Princess Eboli. They made their debuts on the Bolshoi Theatre Historic Stage on December 7th and 10th. Earlier it was expected that Dmitri Hvorostovsky would also make his debut on the Bolshoi Historic Stage on December 7th and 10th. However, the famous singer did not perform due to his illness, the agency reported with the reference to the Bolshoi’s official web site.

Hvorostovsky was diagnosed with a brain tumor in summer 2015. Regardless of the fact that he has been undergoing treatment, he has continued to work. For example, he went on a tour in North America and performed at the VDNKh Green Theatre in the programme “War Songs”. In the end of September the singer had to cancel his performance at the Vienna Opera in the production of “Simon Boccanegra”. Moreover, on December 14th Hvorostovsky planned to perform at the State Kremlin Palace in the concert “Dmitri Hvorostovsky and Friends”.

The [TV Channel NTV](#) showed a report about the preparation for the performance on December 7th. “The dress rehearsal took place one day before. It was the first time that the soloists, the choir and the orchestra came together on the Bolshoi’s stage”.



Dmitri Hvorostovsky

Nearly 60 sources reported that the debut of Hvorostovsky at the Bolshoi Theatre had been cancelled due to his illness. After the news was announced by [TASS](#) the information appeared on various TV channels, radio stations and internet portals, and was also published in different newspapers.

The [TV channel “Culture”](#) released a long report about the production of “Don Carlo” with star debutants.

“The word “debutants” does not really suit them. The singers have already performed on the best stages around the world. Dimitri Pittas (Don Carlo) looks calm, while Ildar Abdrazakov (Philip II) does not cover his emotions. The singer admitted: “I can feel the support, and it is a pleasure for me to go on stage. Moreover, the Moscow audience knows me. I have performed here quite often, so it does feel like home”. The dressing room of Elisabeth is crowded. The Bolshoi divas bless Hibla Gerzmava, the prima of the Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Theatre. She said: “Wish me luck; I hope my voice will sound well, and let God help me. This is a very exciting and nervous experience, and I do hope I can relate to this new part”. Makvala Kasrashvili used to perform the roles of Elisabeth and Eboli. She wishes her luck five minutes before the start. “Don Carlo” is one of Verdi’s longest operas. The composer even cut the score. But the conductor Keri-Lynn Wilson is not frightened by this music; rather, she considers it to be a challenge. “Anything can happen on the stage; this is opera, this is a form of art that is alive. If something happens, it is quite a fantastic experience, so you have to be on alert; I am always ready”, – she says. The Bolshoi presents the new “Don Carlo” with star cast as a premiere. This production is quite an event for both the audience and the singers. In 2007 Ekaterina Gubanova performed the part of Eboli at the Mariinsky. Tonight she sang at the Bolshoi. The singer said: “Still, to perform here is a different experience for me, because this is the home where I was born and raised, where I studied, so this implies a special kind of responsibility”.

The famous bass singer Ildar Abdrazakov, who made his debut in the role of Philip in the opera “Don Carlo” at the Bolshoi Theatre, was a guest on the programme “Artistic Council” ([TV channel “Russia-Culture”](#)). In his interview Ildar says he has added the part of Philip to his Verdi repertoire quite recently; he also talks about the differences in the styles of Verdi’s early and late works. The singer adds that the wooden set helped him a lot, as well as the acoustics of the Historic Stage; he speaks very warmly about his stage partners Hibla Gerzmava and Ekaterina Gubanova and mentions how incredibly skillful the conductor Keri-Lynn Wilson is.

In his interview to the magazine [“Forbes”](#) Ildar Abdrazakov talks about the budgets of productions, honorariums for performing at the Metropolitan or the Vienna Opera, the not very well-known business of Plácido Domingo and admits he dreams of performing in Russia more often.

— Your schedule of performances is full up to 2021; what influences your choice of production? Is it the part, the name of the director or the partner, the venue or the honorarium?

— The venue and the opera are two most important things. A new part is always interesting. If I were offered to do “Il barbiere di Siviglia” at La Scala or “Carmen” at the Metropolitan, I would really think about it. I mean, those are not the main roles, but both of them are interesting, and those are two favourite venues. Then you think: if you go to the Metropolitan, it is cold there in January and February. Milan is warmer and sunnier. Then you look at the cast, see who you would perform with. You also want it to be closer to Moscow. When your kids are at school, it is important to have a chance to go back home for a couple of days. Now the Bolshoi Theatre has opened its doors to me. I hope this is not the last project; I would love to perform at home more.

The regional media source [“Sputnik Abkhazia”](#) reports about the first performance of the People’s Artist of Russia and Abkhazia Hibla Gerzmava at the Bolshoi Theatre. The singer told the journalist Robert Dzhopua: “I was very excited and nervous to go on the stage”.



Hibla Gerzmava as Elisabeth of Valois

Photo courtesy: Damir Yusupov

[TV channel “Culture”](#) presents an interview with Keri-Lynn Wilson, who “has been conducting operas by Italian composers almost exclusively throughout her career; she has done almost all the opera repertoire of the 19th century. During the performance of “Don Carlo”, which is quite a spectacular opera, the Bolshoi audience could not have failed to notice that the way Keri-Lynn Wilson conducts is also quite spectacular”. Wilson explains what makes her job special, talks about her knowledge of the repertoire and her love for the Bolshoi Theatre. Vladislav Flyarkovsky talked to the

conductor at the Bolshoi Theatre Green Living Room. It is remarkable, that the interview is in Russian.

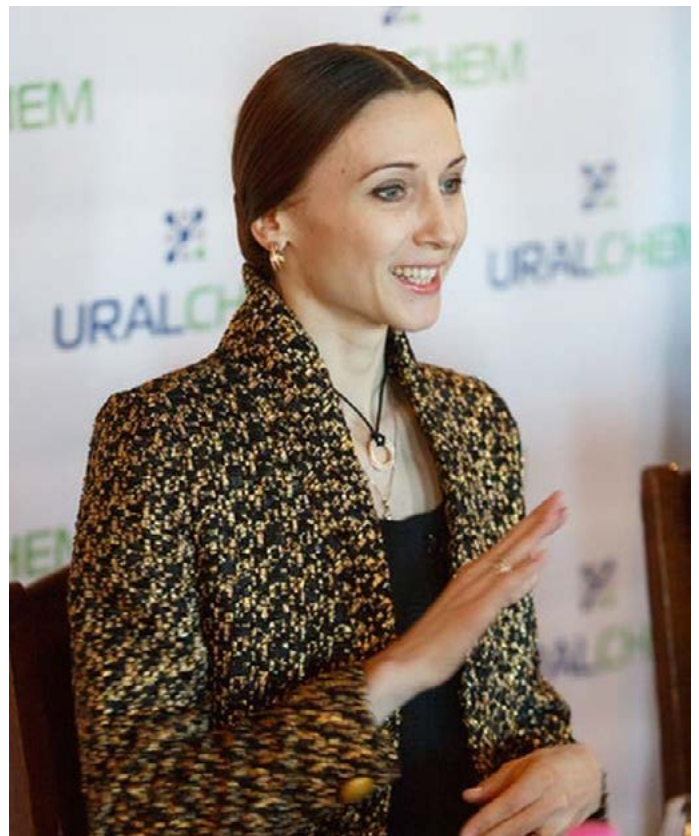
On December 13th the Bolshoi Theatre prima ballerina Svetlana Zakharova presented her programme “Amore” at the Latvian National Opera. The programme consists of three one-act ballets: “Francesca da Rimini” to the music by Tchaikovsky, choreographed by Yuri Possokhov, “Rain Before it Falls” to the music by Handel, Ottorino Respighi and Carlos Pino-Quintana, choreographed by Patrick de Bana, and “Strokes Through The Tails” to the music of Symphony No. 40 by Mozart, staged by the Irish choreographer Marguerite Donlon. The ballets were performed at the Bolshoi Theatre in May 2016.

The ballerina answered the questions of the portal BaltNews.lv and several other Latvian mass media sources.

[BaltNews.lv](#)

[Mixnews.lv](#)

[LSM.lv](#)



Svetlana Zakharova at the press conference in Riga, December 12th. © varshavsky.lv

— Svetlana, where have you come from this time?

— From Moscow. A lot of work is now being done at the Bolshoi, where “Raymonda” to the music by Alexander Glazunov is being brought back. But Mon-

day is a day off, so I am here. I can see that it is a day off at your theatre as well. Just like at any theatre in the world. As for “Raymonda”...The thing is, Yuri Grigorovich, who used to be the director of the Bolshoi Ballet for many many years, is turning 90 years old on January 2nd. There will be a festival where all his major productions will be performed, such as “Spartacus”, “A Legend of Love”, “Swan Lake”, “Sleeping Beauty” and “Ivan the Terrible”.

I danced after Grigorovich had left the Bolshoi and I have not worked with him really closely, but still he is a Patriarch of our art for me. He is still working; now he is in Munich. He does not come to our theatre every day, but when everyone learns he is coming to a rehearsal, everyone loses their nerve. Including me. //

The portal LSM.lv reports that the Bolshoi premiers Mikhail Lobukhin and Denis Rodkin, the company's leading soloist Denis Savin and 10 more Bolshoi Ballet dancers came to Riga together with Zakharova. The famous Russian fashion designer Igor Chapurin created the costumes for “Amore”. The guest performances are a part of the Winter Season, organized by the company Art Forte.

It is more and more often that Ivan Vasiliev makes a statement not only as an unrivaled virtuoso dancer, but also as a promising choreographer. Prior to the premiere of his new ballet “Christmas Stories” at the Mikhailovsky Theatre Ivan gave an interview to the portal [BalletInsider](#).

Bi: You are a successful dancer at the top of your career; how have you started to choreograph yourself?

I.V.: This impulse was given to me in my childhood. It was then that I realised I wanted not only to dance, but also to create something new. I have always wanted to choreograph, but it was thanks to Maria (Maria Vinogradova – Ivan's spouse, the Bolshoi Theatre's leading soloist) that I started to do it; I mean, she literally made me try it.

Bi: Once you said the creative process was easy for you. How exactly does it happen?

I.V.: Everything comes by itself. When you start creating a story, at first you need to understand what this story will be about, that is for sure; then I choose the music, and the movements come at the rehearsal hall. For me the most important thing is to understand what story is that I want to tell.

Bi: Are there people in the domain of choreography you look up to?

I.V.: No, there are not.

[“Moskovsky Komsomolets”](#) presents a detailed report about the joint project of the Bolshoi Theatre and Lincoln Center inspired by the upcoming celebrations, devoted to George Balanchine. “The Lincoln Festival

Center that usually takes place in July decided to mark the 50th anniversary of Balanchine's masterpiece in a special way: “Jewels” will be performed on the stage the ballet was created for, while three ballet companies, representing the countries and the styles praised by Balanchine, will take part in each of the five scheduled performance. These will be the Bolshoi Ballet, the Paris Opera Ballet and the New York City Ballet. In all five performances the French will perform the first part, “Emeralds”, while the Bolshoi Ballet and the City Ballet will take turns in performing “Rubies” and “Diamonds”. However, during the first performance on July 20th the American company will perform the “American” piece, “Rubies”, and the Bolshoi – the “Russian” piece, “Diamonds”. This news became such a sensation (who has the money today to organise such a large-scale project?), that Lincoln Center announced it on Facebook in the format of the video press conference long before the announcement of the rest of the festival programme and the ticket sales have started (these two events will take place only in March). The press conference was hosted by Nigel Redden, the artistic director of the Lincoln Center Festival. The artistic directors of the three companies participated from their own offices: Makhar Vaziev in Moscow, Peter Martins, who performed in “Jewels” when Balanchine was still alive, in New York and Aurelie Dupont, who has recently become the head of the Paris Opera Ballet and used to dance in “Rubies”, in Paris”.

## Press analysis:



### international mass media

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The daily newspaper [The Telegraph](#) (UK) publishes an article about the upcoming screening of the Bolshoi Ballet's Nutcracker in cinemas by Clive Morgan and a link to the Bolshoi Ballet preview video trailer of the performance. “The Bolshoi is one of the world's great powerhouses of classical ballet. Even after the intrigue and scandal that has dogged it in recent years, the company – now under director Vladimir Urin and ballet director Makhar Vaziev – continues to look as sharp as a razor, its dancers demonstrating, as ever, the grand, dramatic, “bolshoi” (“big”) performance style that has long been its calling-card.”

The [Plymouth Herald](#) publishes an article by Richard Amofa who writes “This production of The Nutcracker is the unique version by Bolshoi's historical ballet master Yuri Grigorovich, who will turn 90 years





Anna Nikulina as Marie,  
Denis Rodkin as Nutcracker Prince

old on January 2, 2017. Follow Marie's magical journey - by E.T.A Hoffmann - when her wooden nutcracker doll is transformed into a prince. A truly enchanting tale beautifully told through the method of dance which will no doubt transport children and adults alike to a world of magic and wonder for the holiday season."

The Jamaica newspaper the [Jamaica Gleaner](#) writes "Christmas would not be complete without the enchanting tale of young Marie and her Nutcracker prince! Danced by the Bolshoi's principals, E.T.A. Hoffmann's fairy tale, staged by Russian ballet master Yuri Grigorovich, will transport children and adults alike to a world of magic and wonder for the holiday season."

The local online USA community news publication [Bradenton Patch](#) (Florida, USA) publishes an article by Sherri Lonon who writes "The cast for the ballet's rendition of Tchaikovsky's classic includes Anna Nikulina as Marie, Denis Rodkin as the Nutcracker and Andrei Merkuriev as Drosselmeyer. The Russian Bolshoi Ballet traces its roots back to 1776. Today, the company features more than 250 dancers and is considered one of the largest ballet companies in the world.

[The Sunday Times](#) (UK) publishes a list of the best books of the year in the category of Performance selected by journalist Jonathan Dean. Included is the book *Bolshoi Confidential*. "Away from the screen and onto the stage, but still with bullies, Bolshoi Confidential by Simon Morrison (Fourth Estate £20) tells the history of the Russian ballet in engrossing fashion. Forever linked now with the government and 2013's acid attack on the artistic director, it is a vast history that would have made an excellent Stanley Kubrick film."

[RT TV](#) reports "Luckily, RT is here to help, and has shot unique interactive 360 footage that allows internet users worldwide to see what goes on inside the fabled venue. The video takes the viewer through the restored building's interior, parts of which would normally be off limits to visitors. Experience the view from the royal box, situated in the center of the auditorium, directly opposite the stage - and the best spot in the hall for sound quality."

The specialised dance magazine [Dance Spirit](#) (USA) publishes an article by Margaret Fuhrer about the return of David Hallberg to the stage after an injury. "An Australian dance critic revealed Hallberg would be returning to the stage December 13, dancing Franz in the Australian Ballet's production of *Coppélia*. Naturally, there was much rejoicing" "Welcome back to the stage, David. May you never have to leave it again!"



David Hallberg  
Photo by Matthew Karas for Dance Magazine

Australian dance critic [Deborah Jones](#) writes about Hallberg's return in her blog Follow Spot. "For the past year the American dancer has been based in Melbourne undergoing intensive rehabilitation with

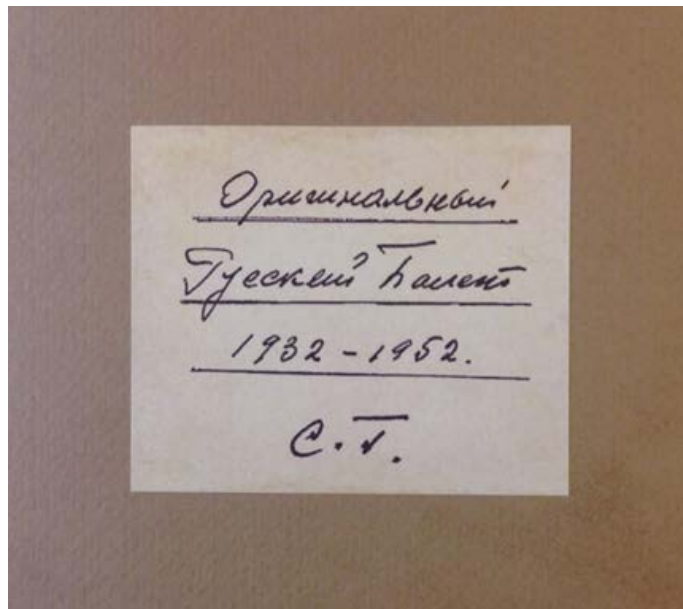
the AB's medical team, a group of people Hallberg says gave him back his artistic life. The work was set in motion by a troublesome ankle injury but became something much more radical as Hallberg and a team led by Sue Mayes took a root-and-branch approach to recovery." "Anyone who thinks Hallberg might be less attached to the Bolshoi because of the changes in leadership since he's been offstage would be quite wrong. He described it as "a home to me, just as much as ABT". Hallberg became a principal at the Bolshoi at the invitation of then artistic director Sergei Filin, who in 2013 was severely injured in an acid attack. Filin was replaced as artistic director earlier this year by Makhar Vaziev, with whom Hallberg has worked at La Scala, Vaziev's previous directorship. Hallberg also said the Bolshoi's general director, Vladimir Urin, "has always been a huge supporter". "I've had a lot of time to reflect, of course, and I do realise, as I have before but even more so now, that Bolshoi is one of the most extraordinary ballet companies in the world. In terms of the tradition it upholds, in terms of the dancers they produce, in terms of the audience in Russia, and really the interest of audiences globally. It's such an influential company. I'm so honoured to have been a part of that and to be a part of that in the future."

The French online specialised dance news publication [Dances Avec la Plume](#) publishes an article by Amélie Bertrand and an interview with Jean-Christophe Maillot. "The end of the year is entrusted to Jean-Christophe Maillot at the Monte-Carlo Ballets. The choreographer presents his new creation Aleatorio from 16 to 18 December, and rearranges his Belle from 28 December to 3 January with the Bolshoi Stars Olga Smirnova and Semyon Chudin. It tells the genesis of these two projects to Dances Avec la Plume." "For me, La Belle was worn by Bernice Coppieters and it was difficult to rethink the ballet without her. But with Olga Smirnova, I can rewrite the thing with her. For me, it is a bit the same phenomenon as with Bernice Coppieters, with 20 years and a generation of difference. There has been a wonderful transmission between them. Olga Smirnova's physical intelligence is such that she has an ability to absorb the information she sees and that she hears. It's a sponge. There is a permanent rise in her work."

## In brief

The year of 2018 in Russia will be devoted to the Russian ballet and will mark the 200th anniversary of the great choreographer Marius Petipa (1818-1910). [TASS](#) reports that the deputy prime minister for social affairs of the Russian Federation Olga Golodets

announced the news at the International Cultural Forum. Golodets chaired the meeting of the organising committee for the celebration of this important date in the history of the Russian and the world ballet, which took place at the Vaganova Academy of Russian Ballet.



The cover of the book "Original Russian Ballet. 1932-1952"

The International art festival "Diaghilev. P.S." presented the book "Original Russian Ballet. 1932-1952", devoted to not very well-known pages in the history of the Russian ballet émigré community. This is the first time the Festival, which is a part of V Saint Petersburg International Cultural Forum, has published a book. The new edition contains diaries of Sergei Grigoriev, a director and an assistant to Sergei Diaghilev, the author of the book "Diaghilev Ballet", which was published in Russia in 1993. After the death of Diaghilev, Sergei Grigoriev worked in the company Original Ballet Russe of Colonel De Basil for 20 years. "Colonel De Basil" was the pseudonym of Vassily Voskresensky, who was a follower of Diaghilev. While Grigoriev was working with him, he made notes about the life of the company in his diary every day; the story was triumphant and dramatic at the same time, since the company wandered across three continents – Europe, America and Australia. Valeria Chistyakova, the author of the brilliant academic commentary to the book, mentions that during this time more than 40 new ballet productions were created and a huge part of Diaghilev's repertoire was revived, a galaxy of brilliant dancers appeared, and – perhaps, most importantly – ballet schools and companies opened wherever the Russian ballet appeared. The book was published following the initiative of Colonel De Basil's grandson Valery Voskresensky. [TASS](#) reporter Oleg Serdobolsky writes about the book in more detail.

The magazine ["Profile"](#) announces, that Ilya Demutsky, who wrote the music for the film "The Student" by Kirill Serebrennikov, was named the best composer of the year by the European Film Academy. The European Film Awards Ceremony took place in Wrocław on December 10th. The award is said to be the analogue of "Oscar" for films made in Europe.

The revival of the ballet "The Tale of the Stone Flower", choreographed by Yuri Grigorovich to the music by Sergei Prokofiev, premiered at the Mariinsky Theatre on December 6th. The cast starred the company's leading soloists Victoria Tereshkina (The Mistress of the Copper Mountain), Ekaterina Osmolkina (Katerina), Andrei Yermakov (Danilo) and Yuri Smekalov (Severyan). Vladislav Karklin conducted the Mariinsky Theatre Symphony Orchestra.

Yuri Grigorovich gave an interview to ["Rossiiskaya Gazeta"](#). The article by Lyudmila Bezrukova is entitled "The Ninth "Flower".

– Do you think it is possible to call "The Tale of the Stone Flower" a 21st-century ballet, bearing in mind that the cast stars dancers that were born and raised in the 21st century?

Yuri Grigorovich: I guess, it is possible. But bearing in mind the amount of time it has been a part of the repertoire of various theatres, including foreign ones, it is better to call it a "timeless ballet"! Naturally, the music by Prokofiev is very important. He is the greatest composer. I knew him. As well as Shostakovich and Khachaturian. These are the best pages of my life – communication and cooperation with these genius musicians!



Photo courtesy: the Mariinsky Theatre press-office

["Saint Petersburg Vedomosti"](#) publish a review of "The Tale of the Stone Flower", the first ballet premiere of this season at the Mariinsky.

On December 29th the Bolshoi Theatre soloist Andrei Jiliovski (baritone) and the winner of XIV Van Cliburn International Competition, the pianist Vadim Kholodenko, are going to perform at the Small Hall of the Conservatoire in the closing concert of the series ["Melody Apriori"](#). The programme of the concert includes selected songs from all four parts of Mörike-Lieder (1888), to texts by Eduard Mörike by Hugo Wold, as well as two piano pieces by Berg and Hindemith, performed by Vadim Kholodenko.

On December 10th and 11th the Royal Ballet prima ballerina Natalia Osipova and the premier of the Perm Ballet Nikita Chetverikov performed the main roles in the ballet "Romeo and Juliet" by Kenneth MacMillan. Teodor Currentzis conducted the orchestra.

[Tatiana Kuznetsova \("Kommersant"\) reports](#)

"Natalia Osipova showed what the British idea of the ballet is: this was almost not a ballet. I mean, the classic ballerina technique – liberal wide tours, explosive leaps, perfect turnout rondos in adagio and precise pas de bourrée – turned out to be impeccable. But in order to notice that, one had to make an effort, because the life of this courageous and extremely frank Juliet on the stage was quite enchanting. Today such a degree of body freedom, psychological fastidiousness and precision of reflective reactions is possible only in the best contemporary dance productions". The author also praises maestro Currentzis: "In all of the circumstances of her brief and brilliant life Juliet-Osipova had the support of her main and most sensitive partner, Teodor Currentzis. He turned the score we know by heart into music of unparalleled depth and tragedy and brought Prokofiev's elastic dancing outrage into focus. This is the rarest case when a unique conductor and a unique ballerina understood each other so well and matched so well in terms of their talent".

[kommersant.ru](http://kommersant.ru)



Natalia Osipova and Nikita Chetverikov  
Photo courtesy: Anton Zavyalov



Prior to her guest performances in Perm Natalia Osipova answered the questions of Maria Sidelnikova. The interview was published by the newspaper [“Kommersant”](#).

– What are your other plans for this season?

– I am mentally preparing myself for “Sleeping Beauty” at the Royal Opera in February-March. I will be working on it for about two months and I want to revise it really well. Then there will be “Mayerling” by Kenneth MacMillan, where I dance the part of Mary Vetsera, and, finally, “Marguerite and Armand” by Sir Frederick Ashton. Those are the main things. In December we dance “Spartacus” in Munich together with Sergei Polunin. I have the part of the courtesan Aegina. I have never wanted to dance it. But when they offered me the chance to do it, I thought: why not? Why do I always want to either suffer or jump? I have never had the roles of powerful, racy and sexy women in my repertoire. It is interesting to see what will come out of it.

The premiere of the ballet “The Snow Queen”, staged by Vyacheslav Samodurov, took place at the Yekaterinburg Opera Theatre on December 10th and 11th. The music director – Pavel Klinichev. It was the first time in many years that the theatre has commissioned the modern composer Artemy Vasiliev to write the music for the ballet. Vasiliev is the author of numerous modern avant-garde pieces, as well as lots of soundtracks (the music for the film “The Flight Crew” is one of his most recent works). The arranger Alexander Troitsky, who works in different styles, including modern music genres, worked together with the composer. [“Oblastnaya Gazeta”](#) published a review: “The ballet “The Snow Queen” still is a fairy-tale and a

The choreographer Vyacheslav Samodurov and the costume designer I. Belousova added some miracles for the contemporary audience: the guards and the troll in the escort of the Snow Queen look like characters from Tolkien’s fantasy, which causes a lot of agitation in the audience hall”.

A monument to the composer Sergei Prokofiev was unveiled in the center of Moscow. The monument appeared next to the house 6/5 in Kamergersky Lane – it was here that the composer lived. The unveiling of the monument, designed by People’s Artist of Russia Andrei Kovalchuk, marked the 125th anniversary of Prokofiev. [“Izvestia”](#) reports that the Deputy Minister of Culture of the Russian Federation Alexander Zhuravsky, the artistic director and the general director of the Mariinsky Theatre Valery Gergiev and other culture luminaries took part in the ceremony.

The XVII International Winter Festival “Arts Square” is taking place at the Saint Petersburg Philharmonia from December 14th till December 25th. The audience has a chance to visit numerous bright events and meet the world’s most prominent performers.

The music festival [“December Nights of Sviatoslav Richter”](#) opened at the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts. The first time it was organised was in 1981, following the initiative of the outstanding Soviet pianist Sviatoslav Richter and Irina Antonova, who was the director of the museum at that time and now is the president of the museum. The topic of this year’s festival is “Traditions, Dialogue, Metamorphosis”. These will be expressed through music pieces by classical composers that are going to be performed amid paintings from the exhibition “Voices of Andre Malraux’s Imaginary Museum”. Andre Malraux was a French writer, art theorist and the Minister of Cultural Affairs with de Gaulle’s administration. The organisers mention that Malraux had the idea to use replicas to unite pieces of art that can never exist side by side in real life; he was looking for similarities in things created in different epochs. The artistic director of the festival Yuri Bashmet opened the event. The concerts of the festival star the Bolshoi Theatre Orchestra Soloists Ensemble, the British ensemble The Tallis Scholars directed by Peter Phillips, the French ensemble Le Pome Harmonique, conducted by Vincent Dumestre, the Borodin Quartet, the vocal ensemble Intrada, directed by Ekaterina Antonenko, Denis Matsuev (piano), Clara-Jumi Kang (violin; Germany), Mikhail Rudy (piano; France), Olga Kulchinskaya (soprano), Yaroslav Abaimov (tenor), Alexander Knyazev (cello) and other outstanding Russian and foreign musicians.



“The Snow Queen” by Vyacheslav Samodurov

journey, set in circumstances that were provided by Andersen and are still easy to recognize: the friendship of Gerda and the Crow, the encounter with the robbers...

Special attention is paid to the two most important anniversaries that are celebrated this year – the 125th anniversary of Sergei Prokofiev and the [110th anniversary of Dmitri Shostakovich](#). At the opening of the Festival, which took place on December 14th, People's Artist of Russia Nikolai Alexeev and the Honoured Ensemble performed The Violin Concerto No. 1 by Shostakovich (soloist – German violinist Julia Fischer) and Symphony No. 5 by Prokofiev. The Festival closes on December 25th, and on this day the orchestra, conducted by maestro Temirkanov, is going to present symphonic fragments from the opera “The Love for Three Oranges” and Piano Concerto No. 2 by Prokofiev (soloist – Denis Matsuev). “The Virtuosos of Moscow» chamber orchestra, conducted by Vladimir Spivakov, is going to present a notably idiosyncratic vocal cycle “The Little Antiformalistic Paradise” by Shostakovich, starring People's Artist of Russia and a soloist of the B. Pokrovsky Theatre Alexei Mochalov (December 20th); the international trio – Alexander Knyazev, Mikhaela Martine and Momo Kodama – performed chamber ensembles by Shostakovich at the Small Hall on December 16th.

The high-profile production of [Prince Igor](#) (2014), a co-production with the New York Metropolitan Opera, directed by Dmitri Tcherniakov, is now coming to Amsterdam. The performances will be held on February 7, 10 and 13 at Dutch National Opera.

## Social networks

[Venera Gimadieva](#) uploaded to her Facebook page a curtain call photo and a backstage photo from the premiere of the opera “The Golden Cockerel” by Rimsky-Korsakov, which took place recently at the theatre La Monnaie in Brussels. Nina Minasyan came to congratulate her friend and colleague.

Friends and colleagues congratulated [Bogdan Volkov](#) on his birthday on his Facebook page.

Colleagues, friends and fans congratulate the Bolshoi Theatre guest artist [Nikolai Didenko](#) for his GRAMMY nomination on his Facebook page.

[Andris Liepa](#) announces the gala-concert and the exhibition marking the memory of his father, the

Bolshoi's outstanding soloist Maris Liepa, in Instagram. He has also uploaded several pictures with Evgenia Obraztsova and Jacopo Tissi from the gala-concert rehearsals.

## Debuts

### “Raymonda”

December 16th (special performance)  
Vitaly Biktimirov as Abderakhman  
Xenia Zhiganshina as Clemence

December 17th, matinee performance (noon)  
Klim Efimov as Jean de Brienne  
Igor Tsvirko as Abderakhman

December 18th  
Yulia Stepanova as Raymonda

### “The Nutcracker”

December 23rd  
Ivan Alexeyev as a French doll

December 24th, matinee performance  
Alexander Vodopetov as an Indian doll

December 24th, evening performance  
Diana Kosyreva as She-Devil

December 27th  
Andrei Koshkin as a Chinese doll  
Alyona Kovalyova, Marfa Sidorenko – Final Waltz and Apotheosis

December 28th, matinee performance  
Elvina Ibraimova as a French doll

December 29th, evening performance  
Nina Biryukova as Fritz

### “Le Nozze di Figaro”

January 11th  
Ivan Maximeyko as Don Curzio

January 12th  
Maria Gavrilova as Marcellina  
Vadim Babichuk as Don Curzio

January 14th  
Vladimir Komovich as Antonio

# Birthdays

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**December 5th** – Jose Carreras (tenor), Spanish opera singer – 70 years old

**December 7th** – Bogdan Volkov, Bolshoi Opera soloist

**December 10th** – Yuri Temirkanov, the artistic director and principal conductor of the St.Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra, a People's Artist of the USSR

**December 14th** – Vasily Ladyuk, Bolshoi Theatre guest soloist

**December 16th** – Rodion Shchedrin, the composer, pianist and a People's Artist of the USSR

**December 17th** – Dinara Alieca, Bolshoi Opera soloist and an Honoured Artist of Azerbaijan

**December 17th** – Nelli Kobakhidze, Bolshoi Ballet soloist