



Newsletter

Events

April 19th – The XXIII National Theatre Award “Golden Mask” award ceremony took place at the Stanislavski and Nemirovich-Danchenko Moscow Academic Music Theatre. The Bolshoi Theatre received 3 awards for the season 2015-2016.

“Rodelinda” received “Opera. Best production” award.

Richard Jones was awarded “Golden Mask” in the category “Best Director” for the opera “Rodelinda”.

Pavel Klinichev was awarded “Golden Mask” in the category “Best Conductor” for the ballet “Ondine”.



“Trauernacht”. Photo by Patrick Berger



Photo courtesy:
Victor Vasenin/ “Rossiiskaya Gazeta”

The full list of the theatre festival “Golden Mask” 23-rd theatre season is available on the festival’s [official site](#).

April 22nd – April 26th – [guest performances](#) of Opera Festival in Aix-en-Provence, one of the leading operatic forums in the world, took place at the Bolshoi Theatre. Productions, staged by the outstanding theatre director Katie Mitchell (UK), were presented on the Bolshoi New Stage.

April 22nd and 23rd – performances of the opera [“Written on Skin”](#) by George Benjamin, co-production Festival d’Aix-en-Provence, Netherlands Opera Amsterdam, Théâtre du Capitole de Toulouse, Royal Opera House Covent Garden. This opera by Benjamin was composed on a commission from the festival and following the personal initiative of its director Bernard Foccroulle. When the opera premiered in 2012, it was said to be “the highlight of Aix”. The action takes place in Provence at the turn of the 13th century, in the era of troubadours, fair ladies and crafty manuscripts, written on parchment. The author received the International Opera Award in the category “World Premiere” for this piece. It was Bernard Foccroulle (the director of La Monnaie at that time) who first suggested to Benjamin in 1992 to write this opera. However, the idea was realised only 20 years later at the Festival d’Aix-en-Provence. By that time Benjamin had already composed one opera (“Into the Little Hill”) that was performed in Paris in 2006. The premiere of the third opera, “Lessons in Love and Violence», is scheduled to take place at the Royal Opera in May 2018.

April 25th and 26th – performances of [“Trauernacht”](#), Festival d’Aix-en-Provence, Dutch National Opera, Amsterdam, l’Opéra national de Bordeaux co-production. The opera premiered on July 11th 2014. “Trauernacht” is a stage interpretation of cantatas by Johann Sebastian Bach; it is a modern spiritual drama about life and the inevitability of death. According to Katie Mitchell, “Bach’s music is a very special thing, given the fact that lots of non-believers find their consolation in it. In a way, my production of “Trauernacht” expresses that admiration with the fact that this music is still relevant”.

On the occasion of Festival d’Aix-en-Provence guest performances the director of the Festival Bernard Foccroulle and the composer [George Benjamin](#) came to Moscow.

April 24th, 4 p.m. – Bernard Foccroulle appeared on the programme “[Academic Talk](#)” (the cycle of programmes featuring professional discussions about theatre) – “Festival of the 21st century, goals and objectives. How to make a theatre festival a cultural enterprise that becomes part of the community and/or an agent of cultural policy”. The meeting was organised by the Theatre Institute, the educational project of “The Golden Mask” Festival with the support of the Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Moscow Academic Music Theatre, the Bolshoi Theatre and L’Institut Français at the French Embassy in Moscow. It took place at the Music Living Room of the Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Theatre.

April 26th – 30th – “[Der Rosenkavalier](#)” is back on the Historic Stage. The famous comic opera by Richard Strauss was staged by [Stephen Lawless](#).

Stephen Lawless was Director of Production for the Glyndebourne Touring Opera from 1986 to 1991, where his work culminated in an immensely successful production of *Death in Venice*, which was subsequently recorded by the BBC for television and video release. In 1990 together with Irina Brown he brought on the stage of the Mariinsky (Kirov) Theatre the famous “Boris Godunov” by Mussorgsky, staged by Andrey Tarkovsky.

“Der Rosenkavalier” premiered on April 3rd 2012. The closing night took place at the Bolshoi in June 2015.

On April 26th, 28th and 30th the cast stars those, who participated in the premiere performances: Melanie Diener as Marschallin, Nicolas Rivenq as Faninal and Lyubov Petrova as Sophie. The cast also stars Ruxandra Donose as Octavian and Alfred Muff as Ochs.



“Der Rosenkavalier”. A scene from the production
Photo courtesy: Damir Yusupov

April 27th and 29th – Johanni van Oostrum as Marschallin, Michaela Selinger as Octavian, Michael

Kupfer as Faninal and Olga Seliverstova as Sophie.

Maestro – Alexander Soloviev, who conducted the premiere of “Der Rosenkavalier” as well.

More information about the production is available on the theatre’s [website](#).

April 28th 2017, the State Academic Bolshoi Theatre of Russia New Stage – the final round of the 3rd All-Russian competition of young dancers “Russian Ballet”.

The competition was founded by the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation together with the Socio-Cultural Initiatives Foundation. Svetlana Medvedeva is the President of the Foundation.

The first “elimination” round of the competition took place in various regions of the Russian Federation, at institutions of tertiary education that offer educational programmes in ballet art.

Both in the first and in the second round a contestant is supposed to present a performance up to fifteen minutes in length; it should include one classical ballet piece – solo (two variations) or duet (pas de deux). Undergraduate students of educational institutions are allowed to perform together with the contestants as their partners; the jury does not evaluate the performance of the former.

The composition of jury is affirmed by the organising committee of the 3rd All-Russian competition of young dancers “Russian Ballet”. Head of the jury – Yuri Grigorovich.

The winners are chosen on an individual basis according to a ten-point scale. Winners of the Grand Prix, the first, the second and the third prizes are selected (both in female and in male groups). Other participants of the contest are awarded diplomas. There are special diplomas “For nurturing a laureate” and “For partnership”, as well as memorable gifts. Besides, all participants of the contest are awarded memorable medals, produced by “Gosznak”. In case all members of the jury vote in favour of the 1st prize laureate, he/she is given a chance to have an internship at the Bolshoi Ballet company under the terms and conditions of fixed-term employment contract.

Two masterpieces by Dmitri Shostakovich inspired by Soviet themes will be presented at the Bolshoi New Stage – “[The Golden Age](#)” and “[The Bright Stream](#)”. Both these ballets have already been Bolshoi trademarks for a long time; during the season 2016-2017 both of them were part of the project “Bolshoi Ballet at the Cinema” and were broadcast at the cinemas in Russia and abroad.

“The Golden Age” is the Bolshoi’s exclusive production; today Dmitri Shostakovich’s first ballet is not performed anywhere else in the world. This is also a premiere of the 241st season: on October 13th 2016 the

legendary production by Yuri Grigorovich with sets and costumes by Simon Virsaladze returned to the theatre for the fourth time. This time the audience was presented with a new, author's version by the outstanding choreographer. Libretto by Isaak Glikman and Yuri Grigorovich. Music director – Pavel Klinichev.

Performances took place on the New Stage on April 29th and 30th, as well as May 2nd.

The casts are available on the Bolshoi's [website](#).

Conductor – Pavel Klinichev.

May 9th, 10th and 11th – performances of the ballet “The Bright Stream” choreographed by Alexei Ratmansky (premiered in 2013). Set designer – Boris Messerer. Music director – Pavel Sorokin.

The casts are available on the Bolshoi's [website](#).

Conductors: May 9th and 10th – Pavel Sorokin, May 11th – Alexei Bogorad.

April 18th, the Beethoven Hall – the Bolshoi Theatre Orchestra Artists Concert “[Do You Like Brahms?](#)” Pieces by Johannes Brahms and Franz Schubert were performed by Alexandra Fedorova (piano), Alexander Mayboroda (violin), Anna Grishina (piano), Vladimir Sklyarevsky (violin), Ekaterina Butakova (violin), Evgenia Popova (viola) and Boris Lifanovsky (cello). MC – Irina Bashkireva.

April 19th – the leading soloists of the Bolshoi Opera Svetlana Shilova (mezzo-soprano) and Pyotr Miguinov (bass) together with the famous pianist Aleksey Goribol presented the concert programme “German Notebook”. Pieces by Robert Schumann, Gustav Mahler and Valery Gavrilin were performed at the Beethoven Hall. Pyotr Kondrashin (cello), the concert master of the cello group, took part in the concert as well. The detailed programme is available on the theatre's [website](#).



Photo courtesy: Raisa Fomina

April 25th, the Beethoven Hall – the second concert “[Songs of Wayfarers](#)”. Ekaterina Morozova (soprano), Elena Popovskaya (soprano) and Konstantin Suchkov (baritone) performed pieces by Richard Wagner, Gustav Mahler, Richard Strauss and Franz Schubert. Mikhail Tsinnman conducted the Bolshoi Theatre Chamber Orchestra.

Two wonderful events are going to take place at the Bolshoi Theatre Historic Stage in May – The People's Artist of the USSR [Mikhail Lavrovsky Jubilee Gala](#) Night and the Moscow State Academy of Choreography Graduates' Gala.

The Gala to mark the 75th jubilee of Mikhail Lavrovsky, the ballet pedagogue, choreographer and legendary dancer, one of those, who have contributed to the Bolshoi Theatre's fame, is going to take place on May 4th.

The programme of the Jubilee Gala includes one-act ballets “Fantasy on the Theme of Casanova” to the music by Mozart and “Nijinsky” to the music by Rachmaninoff, choreographed by the hero of the evening. There also will be the premiere of the Duet from the opera-ballet “AMOK” by Alexander Simonenko, choreographed by Lavrovsky. The Gala will close with the Divertissement. The following Bolshoi Theatre soloists and the master's students are going to take part in the Gala: Ekaterina Krysanova, Marianna Ryzhkina, Maria Vinogradova, Victoria Litvinova, Vladislav Lantratov, Artem Ovcharenko, Igor Tsvirko, Ivan Vasiliev and Klim Efimov. Conductor – Pavel Sorokin.

The detailed programme of the Jubilee Gala Night is available on the Bolshoi's [website](#).

An exhibition dedicated to Mikhail Lavrovsky is being presented in the Bolshoi Theatre Historic Stage Foyer.

The Bolshoi Theatre announced additional auditions to [the Young Artists Opera Program](#) for the season 2017/18 for soloists-vocalists (2-4 vacancies). Singers that were born in the period from 1983 till 1997 and have finished or not yet finished their higher music education can apply.

In order to audition one has to fill in the electronic questionnaire on the [website](#).

The schedule of the auditions and detailed information is available on the Bolshoi Theatre [website](#).

June 10th – 20th, 2017 – XIII International Ballet Competition and Contest of Choreographers is going to take place at the Bolshoi Theatre. The competition was founded by the Government of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation. The organiser – the Federal State Budgetary Cultural Institution “Rosconcer”.



The Bolshoi Theatre Young Artists Opera Program

The competition is held every four years. Such legends of the Russian ballet art, as Galina Ulanova (the head of the jury of the I Competition), Igor Moiseyev (the head of the organising committee of the I Competition) and Olga Lepeshinskaya (the head of the organising committee for the many years that followed) stood at the origins of this contest. Yuri Grigorovich has been the permanent Head of the jury and the Artistic Director of the competition. This year the contest is marking the 90th birthday of Yuri Grigorovich and sets the stage for the Year of the Russian Ballet (2018) and the 200th anniversary of Marius Petipa.

The organising committee of the XIII International Ballet Competition and Contest of Choreographers has decided to award a Grand Prix of \$100 000, which is an unprecedented sum in the history of the contest. More detailed information about the competition is available on its [website](#).

Press analysis:

Russian mass media

The Bolshoi Theatre hosts the Opera Festival in Aix-en-Provence on its New Stage.

Dmitri Renansky ("[Kommersant-Weekend](#)") reports about productions by Katie Mitchell at the Bolshoi Theatre and says they are an extraordinary cultural event that is not to be missed. "The highlight of the theatre season 2016/2017 on the Bolshoi Theatre New Stage: Opera Festival in Aix-en-Provence brings two productions by the outstanding British director Katie Mitchell, the opera "Written on Skin" by the British composer George Benjamin and "Trauernacht", a stage performance of Bach cantatas. The importance of these guest performances is far-reaching and has to

do not only with the opera context itself: the Moscow audience is presented with two masterpieces of the modern European theatre".

Renansky mentions six major productions by Mitchell, including "Christine" (Berlin, Schaubuehne, 2010), "Rings of Saturn" (Avignon Festival, 2012), "Breath" (Berlin, Schaubuehne, 2013), "Alcina" (Aix-en-Provence Festival, 2015), "Pelleas et Melisande" (Aix-en-Provence Festival, 2016) and "Shadow (Eurydice Speaks)" (Berlin, Schaubuehne, 2016).



"Written on Skin". Photo courtesy: Corbis via Getty Images

On April 21st the director of the Opera Festival in Aix-en-Provence Bernard Foccroulle appeared on the programme "Artistic Council" that went on air at midnight on the "[Russia-K](#)" TV channel. Lada Aristarkhova talked to Mr. Foccroulle.

["Kommersant"](#) publishes the interview of Yulia Bederova with the "intendant of the opera festival that is the most ambitious in terms of the creative component and the most audacious in terms of its repertoire". Quote: "If the audience is good, the production is going to be good as well".



Bernard Foccroulle

Photo courtesy: Dmitry Dukhanin/ "Kommersant"

« — First of all, I am happy that the Moscow audience gets a good idea of Katie Mitchell's works, both the baroque music and the modern music, this is wonderful. //

The first and the most important principle for me is the following: if we want the opera to be alive, it is not possible to put the creation of new music at the edge of the theatrical process, I mean, it has to be the centerpiece, the essential part of the opera. I am convinced that the repertoire is alive as long as we constantly invite new composers, new authors of librettos, new designers that are making a contribution to the art of the opera". //

The artist's freedom is an extremely important question. I have been struggling for 25 years trying to provide total freedom to the artist", – says Bernard Foccroulle.

On April 22nd "Culture news with Vladimir Flyarkovsky" (TV channel "Russia-K") presented the report "A legend of the eaten heart: opera by George Benjamin at the Bolshoi" (3'09").

«// "Written on Skin" is already an international hit. This is George Benjamin's second opera; the composer is already referred to as the heir of Benjamin Britten, one of the most prominent composers of the 20th century", – said the programme host, introducing the report by Elena Voroshilova.

"There are wardrobe trunks from Aix-en-Provence in the Bolshoi's corridors. This is not the first time that the Festival is taking place in Moscow. But this is the first time that the French have brought a programme that includes productions that are poles apart. // "Written on Skin" is a complicated story. It takes place in two time dimensions. The medieval story about a troubadour, the eaten heart and books, written on skin, continues nowadays. The past and the present have intertwined in a mystical way. The plot, the text and the music put both singers and musicians to the test. // This is the first time the experimental production has been performed in Moscow. It demands quite a bit of energy and involvement".

The report features short interviews with Katie Mitchell's Associate Director Dan Ayling, the composer George Benjamin, the music director Franck Ollu, the General Director of Festival in Aix-en-Provence Bernard Foccroulle and the Bolshoi Theatre General Director Vladimir Urin.

"Aix-en-Provence is a special festival venue, – said Vladimir Urin. – The Festival is not afraid to experiment and to look for extraordinary solutions. All these solutions are always innovative and lively".

The Russian edition of the celebrity magazine «OK!» published photographs of celebrities that attended the degustation of the "limited coffee collection" Nespres-

so Iced Coffee prior to the performance and reported briefly about the production: // "The plot of the opera centres around a dramatic love triangle story, put into the context of a modern composition".

The online version of "Vedomosti" presents Pyotr Pospelov's analysis of the opera "Written on Skin": "The opera "Written on Skin" by George Benjamin staged by Katie Mitchell was performed at the Bolshoi Theatre. It shows what pornography was like before Gutenberg era".

(In the paper version of "Vedomosti" the article has the title "Pain me, paint"; No. 4308, April 24th).

"The Bolshoi Theatre has been recently awarded "The Golden Mask" for their co-production of "Rodelinda" by Handel with the English National Opera. It demonstrates just how open it is to the modern European culture once again. We presented two productions by Katie Mitchell, who the Moscow audience knows well and appreciates. It was her name that brought to the Bolshoi sophisticated theatre-goers and people from the art sphere; it was the name of the British composer that attracted the no less remarkable group of modern academic music fans..

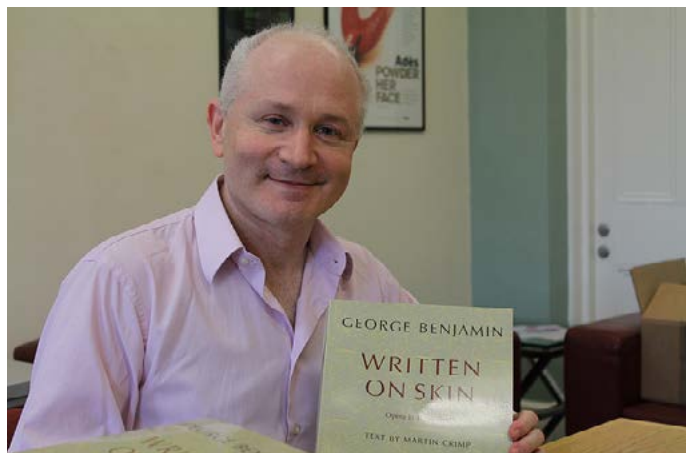
//...The comparison with Benjamin Britten is always forced on George Benjamin, although there are almost no obvious similarities. //...Debussy, on the other hand, can be sensed so plainly that one could consider the opera "Written on Skin" to be "Pelleas" that has undergone an intricate upgrade. Just like in the creation of Maeterlinck/ Debussy the heroes do not really act, but rather "bear their life and faith". The atmosphere here is also gloomy and cool; the singers perform their parts in the same sophisticated manner and not very loudly, their singing is melodious and mezza voce and almost everything is in the middle register, which is comfortable for the vocal chords and does not require too much strain: the forced sound is saved for a couple of culmination scenes only.

The orchestra, conducted by the wonderful Franck Ollu, is the same..

// The music tells more than the words can tell. //

... Superfluous concoction [that of the director] sloughs off as a husk, while the love story remains, no matter what context it has been put into – quite skillfully, one has to admit. // In a nutshell, the only thing that remains is the timeless love triangle; at this point I should mention that the soprano Vera-Lotte Boecker performs the part of Agnès magnificently, the baritone Jeremy Carpenter does a great job as The Protector, who is at first ideal and then cruel, and the contra tenor Tim Mead gives a superb performance of The Boy, who knew how to draw sinful pictures on skin. Together with supporting characters, performed by Victoria Simmonds and Rupert Charlesworth they sang about the same things once again, although in a slightly dif-

ferent manner, those same things being love, passion, death, tears and angels' cold indifference".



George Benjamin. Photo courtesy /Faber Music Ltd

[“Nezavisimaya Gazeta”](#) publishes the analysis by Marina Gaikovich “The case of the eaten heart”.

“One can definitely hear the heir of Britten in the opera of the British composer George Benjamin (born in 1950): apart from the brilliant control of the orchestra and rather audacious theme it also has to do with the manner itself, where one can immediately feel the close connection of the music text with the conceptual and emotional message of the literary text.

...In the orchestra there are not only various curious pieces of percussion, but also viola da gambo and a glass harmonica...the harp plays an important part in this instrumentation as well. Apparently, the composer needed all these instruments in order to highlight the surreal movement between the past and the future, or, on the contrary, something that has frozen between these two worlds. The finale with the ghost-like sound of the glass harmonica truly enchants (maestro Franck Ollu conducted the Bolshoi Theatre Orchestra).

It seems that this opera is an example of the genre that is somewhat Wagnerian, when the synthesis of the words, the music and the stage interpretation to some extent are...inseparable. ...

The designer Vicki Mortimer created the construction of a modern two-story building...Mitchell's idea has many layers as well; the director is piling up the meaning. She moves away from the pure experiment... One way or another, the story, or the emotions and the feelings this story has, fulfills the characters, changes them and poisons them. ...

Katie Mitchell creates a very sensual production... Perhaps, given the variety of meanings, this opera is about love”.

The portal [“Music Seasons”](#) publishes a large interview with the Bolshoi Theatre General Director Vladimir

Urin, who has signed another five-year contract with the Bolshoi. The article is entitled “Not a single victory of today is going to be an excuse for your failure tomorrow”. Vladimir Urin talked about the start and the development of his career, about the repertoire policy, the top-down command structure and the atmosphere at the theatre. Irina Shirinyan talked to the General Director.

MS: Is there ever going to be a time when world famous stars will perform at the Bolshoi?

VU: This is not right. I cannot agree with you. If you take a closer look at the list, you will see that today many of those that perform at the best theatres around the world sing at the Bolshoi Theatre as well.

MS: But many of them are second-echelon singers..

VU: I cannot agree with you. I consider Beloselsky, Netrebko, Vinogradov, Robert Lloyd, who is almost 80, Guleghina, Peretyatko, Abdrazakov, Gerzmava are not second-echelon singers, but first-echelon ones. I mean, I can give you an even longer list of names. Although there is the problem of trying to wear two hats, the first of these hats being the repertoire theatre. We have to give 500 performances a year at this theatre, and this is a situation that does not exist in any other major theatre in the world. Well, perhaps, apart from the Vienna Opera. As for Metropolitan, for example, their goal is very simple, they need to put together a team. They opened this season with the premiere of “Tristan and Isolde” by Wagner. It brought together all these wonderful singers for eight performances in a season, and these performances took place over the course of 12-14 days. This is it, done! Maybe, there will be “Tristan and Isolde” next season, maybe not. But we have a different story! I mean, we are a repertoire theatre. We have staged a production and we need to make sure that the same singers we have invited not only sing at the 4-5 premiere performances, but also do the next block of performances in the same season. If we change casts constantly, the production will fall apart the next day. If we invite other singers, we need to stage the production all over again. Such are the peculiarities we need to take into account when we are trying to bring together repertoire theatre and stagione.

Besides, today many of the Bolshoi Theatre soloists that are employed full-time, are also working at the best opera theatres around the world. This means, they are first-echelon singers as well. I would also like to say a couple of words about our Young Artists Opera Program. Today graduates of this Program take part in the Bolshoi's repertoire productions and are also sought-after at opera theatres abroad. I believe that very soon we will refer to some of them as to the most prominent singers.

You know, there are theatres that can do a brilliant premiere. A theatre invites a star-studded cast for the premiere (the first 3-4 performances). But you should come to see this production at this theatre when it is the tenth, the twelfth, the twentieth performance: a What's-his-name is conducting the orchestra,

performers you have never heard about in your whole entire life are singing..So one of the Bolshoi's major professional goals is to raise the level of the current repertoire productions as much as possible. Every performance, no matter if it is the first one or the thirty first one, should be presented at a level that is worthy of being demonstrated at the Bolshoi.

MS: One more quick question about the ballet repertoire: what productions should ballet fans expect, the ones that have been created especially for the Bolshoi Theatre, or interpretations of some other famous ballet?

VU: Both. If there is a wonderful production with interesting choreography that reflects the individual style of a ballet master, it does not matter if it was created ten, fifteen or twenty years ago. If it has never been staged at the Bolshoi, I believe it is necessary to show it here and we should not be afraid of it. Of course, creating productions especially for the Bolshoi is the priority. This is the pivotal point.

The portal has also published an [interview](#) with the Head of the Bolshoi Theatre Perspective Planning and Special Projects Department: "Irina Chernomurova: "To invite Tcherniakov, one has to queue on the international market".

Irina Chernomurova says: "It is difficult to get great artists on the international market, so theatres queue to get their hands on directors that are busy. Here is an example: our Russian director Dmitri Tcherniakov staged "Ruslan and Lyudmila", his most recent premiere at the Bolshoi, in 2011. Back then he was already booked several years in advance; today his schedule is full up to 2020! How is it possible to squeeze into Tcherniakov's busy schedule? Even if you really want to work with him, you need to queue on the international market. There are artists one have to queue for, while co-productions maybe allow this to happen a bit faster. /./

Whether we want it or not, all theatres in the world still make money on "Tosca", "La Traviata", "Madama Butterfly", the wonderful Verdi and our Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. What can we do about it?"

On April 17th [Dmitry Vdovin](#), the artistic director of the Bolshoi Theatre Young Artists Opera Program and one of the most famous opera pedagogues in the world, celebrated his birthday. Maestro turned 55 years old. His students were winners of the most prestigious competitions, he is working at some of the best theatres, but he has been faithful to the Bolshoi Theatre for more than 30 years. An Honoured Artist of the Russian Federation, professor Dmitri Vdovini gave an interview to Ekaterina Andreas ([muzcentrum.ru](#)); he talked about specific features of his profession, explained how rapidly the opera world is changing and what to do about it.

About 50 prizes were given out during the award ceremony of the national theatre award "Golden Mask" that took place on April 19th at the Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Moscow Academic Music Theatre. The award ceremony became the main news story of the week. Richard Jones who staged Handel's "Rodelinda" at the Bolshoi Theatre received the prize in the category "Opera. Best director". The same production was awarded in the category "Opera. Best Production". [First Channel](#) reports.

"It was the first time in the history of the "Golden Mask" when the nominee in the category "Ballet. Best Conductor" had no reason to be nervous. The intriguing question was not who would be awarded, but what particular production he would receive the prize for. There was only one person, Pavel Klinichev, who had been nominated in all three categories. The jury decided the ballet "Ondine" at the Bolshoi Theatre was his best work. The conductor said: "It is nice to go to the ceremony, knowing that you are going to get the prize anyway". By the way, the Bolshoi set an absolute record this year. Six productions of this theatre received nominations in 25 categories. Three prizes were awarded. Richard Jones, the director of Handel's "Rodelinda", celebrated his triumph together with Klinichev. This production also received the "Best Opera" award. As for the best conductor, it came as no surprise that the prize was given to the artistic director of the Perm Tchaikovsky Opera and Ballet Theatre Teodor Currentzis. He is referred to as a music genius. This is his sixth "Golden Mask"; this time he received the award for "La Traviata".



A scene from the production
Photo courtesy: Damir Yusupov

The following TV channels reported about the "Golden Mask" award ceremony:

[REN TV](#)
[Vesti.ru](#)
[TV Culture](#)
[NTV](#)

Vladimir Urin, the Bolshoi Theatre General Director, told the reporter: "Talented people should be awarded as a result of this competition, and it does not matter where they work. It makes no difference whether they work in Arkhangelsk, Novosibirsk, Yekaterinburg, Moscow or Saint Petersburg. A production should be a talented one, no matter where it is staged".

[TASS](#) reports that the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin sent his greetings to the participants, the organisers and the guests of the Russian national theatre prize "Golden Mask" award ceremony.

The text of the welcoming telegram was published on the [Kremlin website](#) on Wednesday.

The telegram reads: "Your creative project is aimed at preserving legendary artistic traditions that the Russian theatre art is rightly proud of. It introduces professionals and members of the audience to the brightest premieres of the season and with the best works of certain stage directors and actors. Naturally, it is important to mention that "Golden Mask" contributes to supporting theatres which represent various cities and regions and to strengthening the universal cultural environment of the country".

Dozens of sources report that the Bolshoi Theatre received three "Golden Mask" awards. Here is the list of the key ones:

[TASS](#)

[RIA Novosti](#)

[Interfax](#)

[Vedomosti](#)

[Rossiiskaya Gazeta](#)

[Nezavisimaya Gazeta](#)

[Vechernaya Moskva](#)

[Izvestia](#)

[Gazeta.Ru](#)

["Trud"](#)

["Komsomolskaya Pravda"](#)

["Moskovskiy Komsomolets"](#)

[InterMedia news agency](#)

[Online source m24.ru](#)

[Lenta.ru](#)

[Colta.ru](#)

[Buro 24/7](#)

[Vesti FM](#)

["Echo Moskvy"](#)

[Dozhd](#)

[Snob.ru](#)

A total of 74 productions from 25 cities of Russia were performed during the "Golden Mask" Festival. There was a record number of nominees – 213 stage directors, actors, designers, composers and playwrights. The Bolshoi Theatre had more nominations than any other theatre.

The TV broadcast of "Golden Mask" award ceremony took place on Sunday, April 23rd, at 11.30 p.m. on the [TV channel "Culture"](#). MCs: Anya Chipovskaya and Sergei Epishev.

The premiere of the film "Bolshoi" by Valery Todorovsky took place at the Bolshoi Theatre. Mass media sources provided extensive coverage of this event. Various news agencies, printed and online sources and numerous online news readers reported about it. Many guests, including Olga Golodets, Roman Abramovich and Darya Zhukova attended the premiere.

The screen was mounted on the Historic Stage; the guests gathered in the audience hall. [Vesti. RU](#) report that films have not been shown at the Bolshoi since the times of "Battleship Potemkin".

The director of the film "Bolshoi" Valery Todorovsky was hesitant: "I have always been interested in ballet. I wanted to write something about it. At first it did not really work, but then I got it right. When we started shooting, I thought if I was doing the right thing, if I could elaborate on this".

[ria.ru](#)

Numerous sources reviewed the film:

["Kommersant"](#). An article by Tatiana Kuznetsova

[Kommersant Style](#)

["Rossiiskaya Gazeta"](#)

["Vechernaya Moskva"](#)

["Izvestia"](#) publish the article by Svetlana Naborschikova

[RIA Novosti](#) report: the Gala of the famous dancer and choreographer Mikhail Lavrovsky and the Moscow State Academy of Choreography Graduates' Gala are scheduled to take place at the Bolshoi in May. «The Gala marking the 75th jubilee of Mikhail Lavrovsky is going to take place on the Bolshoi Theatre Historic Stage on May 4th. The programme of the Jubilee Gala includes one-act ballets "Fantasy on the Theme of Casanova" to the music by Mozart and "Nijinsky" to the music by Rachmaninoff, choreographed by the hero of the evening. There also will be the premiere of the Duet from the opera-ballet "AMOK" by Alexander Simonenko, choreographed by Lavrovsky. The Gala will close with the Divertissement. The following Bolshoi Theatre soloists and the master's students are going to take part in the Gala: Ekaterina Krysanova, Marianna Ryzhkina, Maria Vinogradova, Victoria Litvinova, Vladislav Lantratov, Artem Ovcharenko, Igor Tsvirko, Ivan Vasiliev and Klim Efimov. Conductor – Pavel Sorokin.

For two days in mid-May the Bolshoi Theatre gives its Historic Stage to the Moscow State Academy of Choreography graduates. On May 17th and 18th there will be galas, starring graduates of the main institution that supplies the Bolshoi Ballet with talented young artists".



Mikhail Lavrovsky

The Bolshoi Ballet artist Klim Efimov appeared on the programme “Who’s there”.

The TV channel “Culture” host Vernik Vernik explains how important it is for a talented artist to be noticed. The Bolshoi Ballet artistic director Makhar Vaziev gave the corps de ballet dancer Klim Efimov a chance to show himself. The son of the ballerina Marianna Ryzhkina and the ballet dancer Boris Efimov performed the main parts in the ballet “Raymonda” by Glazunov and “The Nutcracker” by Tchaikovsky. The programme went on air on April 16th.

An accessible environment programme for the blind and the vision-impaired has been implemented at the Bolshoi Theatre. TASS reports about it with the reference to the government materials for the annual report in the State Duma.

“Measures to create an accessible environment for people that suffer from locomotor system disabilities have been taken in 11 theatres; measures to create an accessible environment for people that suffer from impaired hearing have been taken in two theatres;

measures to create an accessible environment for people that suffer from impairment of vision have been taken in one theatre (the State Academic Bolshoi Theatre of Russia”, – the document says.

Press analysis:

international mass media

Local newspapers and online publications continue to announce upcoming screenings of Bolshoi Ballet productions in local cinemas. For example the local Jamaica newspaper [the Jamaica Gleaner](#) announces “In this resplendent and magical classic, the Bolshoi dancers take us on a dream-like journey through this classic fairy tale complete with jewel fairies, a magical kingdom, a youthful princess and a handsome prince, in this purest style of classical ballet. The Bolshoi’s sumptuous staging with its luxurious sets and costumes, gives life to Perrault’s fairy tale unlike any other. A must-see!”

[Queensland Ballet](#) presents “Swan Lake”. Performances are going to take place at the Lyric Theatre, QPAC from May 5 to 13. Starring Evgenia Obraztsova. The Australian daily newspaper The Courier Mail reports “THERE are two words which sum up why we are excited that Russian ballerina Evgenia Obraztsova is coming to Brisbane. Bolshoi Ballet. So do we have your attention? Evgenia Obraztsova. Obraztsova is a principal with the famed Russian company and she’s coming here to dance in Queensland Ballet’s “Swan Lake”. Queensland Ballet’s artistic director Li Cunxin says he is thrilled to have the Russian Ballerina coming to join the company for two performances on May 9 and 11.”

[Dance Magazine](#) also publishes an article by Madeline Schrock about the Benois de la Danse Nominees. “Each year, the Benois de la Danse selects the best male and female ballet dancer and a top choreographer from an impressive group of international artists. But just because it draws on a worldwide talent pool doesn’t mean the names are all unrecognizable. This year’s Moscow-based awards highlight the performances of many Dance Magazine favorites – and no less than three former cover stars.” A full list of nominees is published.

The online entertainment news publication [Broadway World](#) announces “Desyatnikov’s SKETCHES TO

SUNSETS Featuring Roman Mints Releases. Quartz Music presents a new album featuring the mesmerizing and deeply beautiful music of Leonid Desyatnikov, one of today's most treasured and frequently-performed living Russian composers, and including the world premiere recording of the 1992 work Sketches to Sunset, and the Russian Seasons. Supervised by the composer, the new recording features renowned violinist Roman Mints with the Brno Philharmonic Orchestra and the Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Philipp Chizhevsky. This new release follows Roman Mints's recent albums for Quartz – Dance of Shadows and a double-album of works by Alfred Schnittke - which have been widely critically-acclaimed."

In brief

XVI International Ballet Festival Dance Open closed in Saint-Petersburg on April 24th.

"[Culture News](#)" reports: on April 19th the Polish National Ballet presented the production "The Tempest".

"A great variety of modern choreography pieces, from neoclassical to the most audacious avant-garde ballets, was presented at the International Ballet Festival Dance Open that is taking place in Saint Petersburg. "The Tempest", based on Shakespeare's play, has become one of the highlights of this event. The Polish National Ballet presented this production by Krzysztof Pastor. This company, which traces its history back to the 18th century, is one of the leaders of the modern European dance today.

For the Polish choreographer Krzysztof Pastor the production of Shakespeare's "The Tempest" is a milestone. He first staged the ballet in Amsterdam, and two years later brought it to Warsaw, where the ballet was performed by the Polish National Ballet, of which he is the artistic director".

On April 21st and 22nd the [Netherlands Dance Theatre](#) (NDT-I) presented one-act ballets "Shoot the Moon"/ "Silent Screen"/ "Thin Skin".

[The Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Moscow Academic Music Theatre](#) announced plans for the coming season. Quite naturally, the change of management that took place in the end of the previous season (Anton Getman became the new General Director instead of Ara Karapetyan) and continued in the first half of the current season (the ballet company artistic director Igor Zelensky left to work with the Munich Ballet, and Laurent Hilaire, an outsider from the Paris Opera, took his place) resulted in changes to agenda as well. The repertoire of the theatre is now going to

include a ballet by the famous Swedish choreographer Alexander Ekman, which is quite a sensation! As for classical repertoire, Hilaire has announced the ballet "Don Quixote" with sophisticated choreography by Rudolph Nureyev who was a mentor and advisor to the new head of the Stanislavsky Theatre Ballet Company during his time at the Grand Opera. This is the first time that a ballet by Rudolph Nureyev is going to be staged in Russia.

On April 20th the Bolshoi Theatre principal Vladislav Lantratov performed the part of Master in the ballet extravaganza "Master and Margarita". The performance took place during the V International Festival of Modern Choreography in Krasnodar. Choreography by Alexander Matsko. On April 28th the Festival continued with the production of "Eugene Onegin" by Boris Eifman Ballet Theatre. "[Russia. Kuban](#)" reports that on April 30th the Festival closed with the dance show of youth dance group "Test-Drive". The jubilee festival took place from April 20th till April 30th at the music theatre "Premiera".



Vladislav Lantratov and Alexander Matsko

The Bolshoi Theatre soloist Venera Gimadieva performed the main role in the opera “Lucia di Lammermoor” at the [Beijing National Centre for the Performing Arts](#). The opera festival at the Grand National Theatre -2017 opened last week with the premiere of this opera, staged by Yannis Kokkos, who is the director and the designer of this production. The National Center for the Performing Arts / the Grand National Theatre/ vice-president Zhaon Tiechun announced that after having its premiere in China, the opera, marking the 200th anniversary of Gaetano Donizetti, will be performed at the Mariinsky Theatre. The Israeli conductor Daniel Oren is the music director of the production; he took the place of the Mariinsky Theatre General Director and artistic director Valery Gergiev, who had to cancel his trip to the Celestial Empire due to unexpected circumstances.

Venera was joined by Stefano Secco as Edgardo and Marco Caria as Enrico. For more detail please visit the website of the Beijing Center for the Performing Arts.



Venera Gimadieva as Lucia

On April 15th the opera “[Snow Maiden](#)” by Rimsky-Korsakov staged by Dmitri Tchernakov premiered at the Paris Opera.

Conductor – Mikhail Tatarnikov. Costume designer – Elena Zaitseva. Lighting designer – Gleb Filshtinsky. Gelia Pevzner talked to the director of the production Dmitri Tchernakov; he explained why he prefers to offer theatres Russian music in the first place.

[RFL.ru reports](#)

Tchernakov: “A year ago I staged “Iolanta/The Nutcracker” at the Opera Garnier. This also was my idea. Initially the theatre wanted me to stage “Iolanta” and we were looking for the second piece, since “Iolanta” is a one-act opera. I suggested doing it with a ballet. At first the theatre was rattled, but then they jumped at this idea. This is the way Tchaikovsky originally composed it in 1892. This was the commission from the Imperial Theatre, to put together a one-act opera and the ballet “The Nutcracker”, which is in two acts, but it is a short ballet. This was one production: opera – intermission – ballet. Tchaikovsky created both pieces as a single musical world, I mean, he had the idea about both of them at the same time. In the end of the 19th century this was a homage to the French tradition. A year ago the whole thing was brought back to its motherland, to France. “Snow Maiden” is similar in a way, because when Ostrovsky wrote this play, it raised some eyebrows and did not have any great success, it did not live up to the audience’s expectations. Everyone said it was very strange for Ostrovsky. He was the Maly Theatre playwright, and, as you know, the Maly Theatre was located next to the Bolshoi. There were drama actors at the Maly Theatre, there was opera and ballet at the Bolshoi. So, the Maly Theatre was closed for some time, and its actors performed at the Bolshoi; this never happens today, but back then it happened from time to time. Therefore, one day there was a drama production at the Bolshoi, the next day there was opera and the next day – ballet. The management had an idea to create one big enchanting spectacle, joining all different kinds of art. This was also a homage to the French tradition. So Ostrovsky was commissioned to write this play. By the way, it was Tchaikovsky who wrote the music for that spectacle; this happened many years before Rimsky-Korsakov composed his opera. Tchaikovsky has an enormous amount of music for the drama production “Snow Maiden”; as for Rimsky-Korsakov, he wrote his opera in 1881, eight years later. Nevertheless, his opera is still based on Ostrovsky’s play; it was created because of this homage to the French tradition, and now it is back in Paris”.

Kamila Mamadnazarbekova ([“Vedomosti”](#)) reviews the production.

The portal [“Russkiy Ochevidets”](#) / “Russian Spectator” publishes an ecstatic review and mentions that the Bolshoi Theatre General Director Vladimir Urin attended the premiere. “Dmitri Tchernakov (46) is the most sought-after Russian director in the West; he has staged more than 40 operas at different theatres

around the world, including such masterpieces as “Boris Godunov”, “Khovanshchina”, “Ruslan and Lyudmila”, “Prince Igor”, “Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District”, “The Gambler” and others.

Perhaps, Dmitri Tcherniakov is the first person after Sergei Diaghilev that does so much in order to show treasures of the Russian music that are not known here”.

The live transmission of the opera “Snow Maiden” from [Opera Bastille](#) took place on April 25th at the cinema UGC and at other cinemas in Paris and in other cities as a part of the project «Vive l’Opera!». The opera will also be broadcast by the TV channel Arte. The production closes at Opera Bastille on May 3rd. The company Bel Air is going to release this opera on DVD later.

[COLTA.RU](#) publishes an interview with Vyacheslav Samodurov, “Golden Mask” nominee for “Romeo and Juliet”, choreographed for Yekaterinburg Ballet and “Ondine” for the Bolshoi Theatre.

During guest performances in Saint Petersburg Sofia Dymova talked to the choreographer about his future plans and his attitude to the past.

– Recently the Yekaterinburg Ballet has announced its plans for the coming season; there are going to be three major productions.

– I do not weigh ballets in kilograms; I mean, the fact that they are large-scale ones is not important. These are three different projects that express the same desire, and that is the desire to understand Marius Petipa. We are going to dedicate this season to Petipa’s anniversary: many dancers, including myself, grew up with his ballets, which are still feeding us. A different approach to his heritage is used in each of the three premieres. I am going to talk about them not in the chronological order, but in terms of progressive motion. I will start with “Les Millions d’Arléquin”. This is commedia del arte, 1900, the Hermitage chamber theatre and two short acts – at that time Petipa had finished working on such giant productions as “Raymonda” or “Sleeping Beauty” and turned his attention to miniatures. What is important for me, is the fact that this is a scientific reconstruction of the ballet, the first one in our repertoire, and that it is going to be carried out by Yuri Burlaka, a wonderful specialist of ancient dance. After all, our theatre is rather a chamber one, and I believe it is appropriate to draw this parallel “Hermitage – the Yekaterinburg theatre”. //

Sasha Filin, the son of the Bolshoi Theatre Young Artist Ballet Program artistic director Sergei Filin, was selected to take part in the final round of [Junior Eurovision](#). Filin’s spouse Maria Prorvich shared the news on her Facebook page.



The choreographer Vyacheslav Samodurov
Photo courtesy: Elena Lekhova

On April 27th the ballet prize “Soul of the Dance”, which is the only professional ballet award in Russia”, was given out in Moscow for the 23rd time. The award ceremony took place at the Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Moscow Academic Music Theatre.

The prize was founded by the magazine “Ballet” and the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation in 1994. Since that time it has been awarded annually to masters of choreography as well as conductors, designers, pedagogues and journalists that report about main events in the ballet world.

The Bolshoi Ballet leading soloist Igor Tsvirko received the prize in the category “Star”; the Bolshoi Theatre spokeswoman Katerina Novikova was given the award in the category “Press-leader”.

[tass.ru](#)
[tass.ru](#)

Social networks

Andris Liepa shared an archive photograph from the rehearsal of the ballet “Apollo” with Nina Ananiashvili.

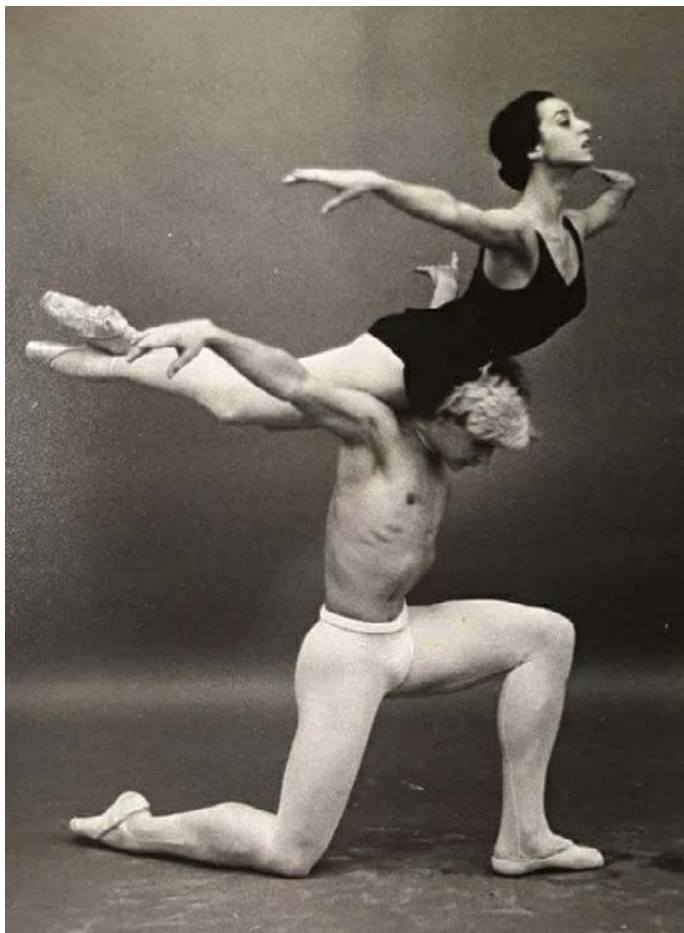


Photo courtesy: Nina Alovert. «Apollon Musagète», choreographed by Balanchine. 1987. New York

Debuts

“Le Corsaire”

April 18th – Elvina Ibraimova made her debut as Gulnare

April 19th – Yulia Stepanova performed the part of Medora for the first time in Moscow (she made her debut with this part in London). Ana Turazashvili made her debut as Gulnare. Daria Bochkova performed in Pas d’esclaves for the first time in Moscow (she made her debut during the company’s guest performances

in London). Xenia Zhiganshina performed the part of Second Odalisque for the first time in Moscow (she made her debut during the company’s guest performances in London).

April 20th – Artemy Belyakov made his debut as Grand pas des eventails Soloist. Ekaterina Besedina, Anna Zakaraya, Dmitry Ekaterinin and Kamil Yangurazov made their debuts in Danse des forbans.

“Don Quixote”

April 22nd (matinee performance) – Anastasia Vinokur, Andrei Koshkin, Artem Kalistratov and Ilya Vladimirov – Jig

April 22nd (evening performance) – Yanina Papienko made her debut as a Street Dancer, Olga Kalinina – as Cupid

April 23rd – Elvina Ibraimova made her debut as a Street Dancer

“The Fables of the Vixen, the Duckling and Balda”

April 23rd (matinee performance) – Alexandra Durseneva as Soprano (“The Tale of the Priest and of his Workman Balda”)

“Der Rosenkavalier”

April 26th – Oxana Gorchakovskaya as Marianne Leitmetzerin. Boris Stepanov (the Mikhailovsky Theatre) as an Italian singer. Vadim Babichuk as a vendor of pets

April 27th – Igor Tsurkan as an Italian singer

Changes to the playbill

“Le Corsaire”. Yulia Stepanova and Alexander Volchkov performed the leading parts on April 19th, Ekaterina Shipulina and Mikhail Lobukhin – on April 20th.

Artemy Belyakov appeared as Grand pas des eventails Soloist in all three performances. Artem Ovcharenko had been announced to perform this part earlier; however, his performance was cancelled.

April 20th – Vitaly Biktimirov performed the part of Birbanto instead of Andrei Merkuriev.

Birthdays

April 17th – the artistic director of the Young Artists Opera Program, an Honoured Artist of the Russian Federation Dmitri Vdovin – 55th birthday

April 18th – a ballet dancer, pedagogue, choreographer, painter and a People's Artist of the USSR Vladimir Vasiliev

April 18th – the 80th birthday of Marcia Haydée, one of the greatest ballerinas of the 20th century, the muse of John Cranko, who created his ballet “Romeo and Juliet”, “Onegin”, “The Taming of the Shrew” and “The Firebird” for her

April 23rd – a composer, conductor and a pianist Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)

April 29th – a ballet master-repetiteur and an Honoured Artist of Russia Yan Godovsky

April 29th – International Dance Day

April 29th – the ballerina Zizi Jeanmaire, the wife and the muse of the outstanding French choreographer Roland Petit – 93rd birthday



Zizi Jeanmaire and Roland Petit