

A Russian Fairy Tale in Rural Massachusetts

By [John Freedman](#)

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There are plenty of people who I am sure would be willing to testify that I don't know much. Frankly, I wouldn't dispute that. Nevertheless, I feel safe in saying that Double Edge Theater is a unique and surprising organization. In any case, I have never seen anything like it.

[Double Edge](#) is located on a farm in the tiny hill town of Ashfield, Massachusetts, approximately two hours west of Boston. However, its productions have been seen in cities all over the United States, and in such countries as Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary and Romania. It was named as a participant in UNESCO's 2010: International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures program, and two weeks ago it was named one of the 1,000 Great Places in the state of Massachusetts.

Allow me to be forthcoming. I am presently in residence at Double Edge, working on a book with Stacy Klein, the theater's founder and artistic director, and I am helping to shape and create the script for the theater's latest summer spectacle, an outdoor version of the Russian

fairy tale “The Firebird.”

In anticipation of those who think that compromises my right to provide information about this unusual place, I will bow out in a moment and turn this space over to Matthew Glassman, the lead actor and co-director at the theater.

I caught up with Matthew on Tuesday, the day before Wednesday’s premiere of “The Firebird.” I asked him to stand by the theater’s sign on Route 116 – which explains the occasional interference of traffic – and tell me about his and the theater’s connection to Russian culture.

All of Matthew’s ancestors came from Russia or Ukraine at the beginning of the last century. Still, it wasn’t until April of this year that Matthew, Stacy Klein and a few other members of the troupe visited Russia.

Matthew found the experience “overwhelming.”

Speaking of St. Basil’s Cathedral on the south end of Red Square, Matthew said the experience of touring the church was “mind-blowing, spiritual and artistic. It changed my perspective on art and architecture.”

He also declared that he had never witnessed a structure that possessed so much “craziness” and “coherence” at the same time. “It was like going inside a story or a painting,” he added.

But why read about Matthew’s comments when you can click on the picture below and hear his story for yourself?

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