

Gergiev: Theater Stage on Time

By [Galina Stolyarova](#)

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ST. PETERSBURG — Mariinsky Theater artistic director Valery Gergiev has dismissed rumors that the opening of the theater's second stage would be delayed until 2015.

Responding to media speculation that the new venue, which is currently due to open in a year's time, will not open its doors to spectators until 2013 or even 2015, Gergiev said that although the deadline for the end of the construction is currently being finalized, the maestro will personally make sure that no procrastination occurs.

"Do not believe the nonsense about the 2015 deadline; work is in full swing, and we are keeping a close eye on the construction process to ensure that nobody works half-heartedly," Gergiev said in a news conference last week.

"The troupe needs the new stage like every living creature needs oxygen. It is shameful that in the 21st century, the Mariinsky Theater has to close for at least five days to mount the sets for Andrei Konchalovsky's staging of Prokofiev's opera 'War and Peace.'"

The Mariinsky's 228th season ended in July with soul-searching and experimenting, in the form of a premiere of Claudia Solti's mesmerizing take on Britten's opera "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

"We had a most productive season, with more than 500 performances both on home soil and abroad," Gergiev told reporters at the news conference.

"At this stage, it is crucially important for the company to try new artistic ground and be involved in experiments that offer both the company and audiences daring new angles. That is why we have chosen to work with directors such as Daniele Finzi Pasca, whose productions for Cirque du Soleil have gained international recognition, and Claudia Solti, who has an extensive background in filmmaking.

"Finzi Pasca, who staged Verdi's 'Aida' for the Mariinsky Theater Concert Hall, is renowned for his unique way of communicating with audiences, regardless of their cultural background or country of origin, and we very much hope that his production will become a bestselling hit," Gergiev added.

The theater's next season opens Sept. 26 with Finzi Pasca's "Aida." The next day will see a concert by the eminent pianist Denis Matsuyev alongside the Urals Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Gergiev at the Mariinsky Concert Hall.

Opera premieres to look out for in the coming season include the musical "My Fair Lady" by Loewe, originally produced by Robert Carson for the Theatre de Chatelet in Paris, and Graham Vick's take on Mussorgsky's "Boris Godunov" (a joint project with the Baden-Baden Opera Theater). Another operatic treat looks set to be Debussy's "Pelleas et Melisande" which will be staged by Daniel Kramer, who was responsible for the production of Bartok's "Duke Bluebeard's Castle" for the Mariinsky last year.

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