

Off-Tune Piano Stops Putin's Show

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President-elect Vladimir Putin attempted to show off his musical talent at a St. Petersburg theater on Tuesday, but he quickly stopped pounding out a Soviet-era tune when he realized that the piano was out of tune.

Putin, who made headlines for playing the opening notes of "Blueberry Hill" at a charity event in December 2010, spotted the piano during a visit to the privately owned Russian Enterprise Theater, whose director, Rudolf Furmanov, is an old friend, Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

Putin sat down at the piano in a room lined with dozens of photos of actors and started playing "Gorod Nad Volnoi Nevoi" (City on the Free Neva), the unofficial anthem of Leningrad during Soviet times.

But after a few seconds, he remarked, "It's out of tune," and abruptly got up.

"Yes, it has not been tuned," Furmanov replied with a smile.

Putin toured the theater at the invitation of Furmanov, who actively helped Putin in his recent presidential election campaign, Peskov said.

The two men's friendship dates back to the early 1990s, when Putin worked at the St. Petersburg mayor's office and personally helped develop the theater, established in 1988 as the country's first nonstate-owned theater, said Life News, which published a [video](#) of Putin at the piano.

Peskov declined to comment on what the two men discussed during the visit, saying only that Furmanov did not ask Putin for money. "This is a unique theater," Peskov said. "It's small, but proud and self-sufficient. It asks nothing from the government."

Putin began taking piano lessons about two years ago and has displayed his ability to play several times in public.

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