

# Opera Legend Vishnevskaya Dies Aged 86

December 12, 2012



Vishnevskaya, pictured here in 2008, sang in the roles of more than 30 celebrated Russian and Western female heroes at the Bolshoi Theater between 1952 and 1974.

Prominent Soviet and Russian opera singer Galina Vishnevskaya has died aged 86.

No date or cause of death had been reported as of Wednesday morning.

President Vladimir Putin and Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev sent their condolences to Vishnevskaya's relatives.

Vishnevskaya sang in the roles of more than 30 celebrated Russian and Western female heroes at the Bolshoi Theater between 1952 and 1974, according to the [website](#) of the Galina Vishnevskaya Opera Center.

Vishnevskaya also performed at Covent Garden in London, the Metropolitan Opera in New York, the Grand Opera in Paris, La Scala in Milan and other renowned venues.

Putin said Vishnevskaya's life represented an "epoch in the world and national culture"

and that she was "known and loved by millions of people," the opera center bearing her name said in a [statement](#).

Medvedev said Vishnevskaya symbolized "the soul of the Russian national culture." Vishnevskaya was awarded the Order For Merit to the Fatherland first-class on Dec. 1 in a decree signed by Putin, Itar-Tass reported.

Vishnevskaya was married to famous Soviet cellist and conductor Mstislav Rostropovich who died in 2007. The couple was forced to leave the Soviet Union in 1974 because of their opposition to the country's authorities; they were stripped of their citizenship in 1978.

In 1990, the couple had their citizenship reinstated and returned to Russia. They lived in the United States, France and Britain at different times.

A farewell ceremony for the opera legend will take place Thursday at the Galina Vishnevskaya Opera Center at 25/1 Ulitsa Ostozhenka. A requiem will be also be served Friday at Moscow's Christ the Savior Cathedral.

Vishnevskaya is likely to be buried at Moscow's elite Novodevichye Cemetery behind her husband, news reports said.

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