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Art Pops: Arnie Will be Back for Olympics

By Lena Smirnova

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From get well wishes to birthday greetings, this week was marked with multiple ups and downs for Russian artists.

If Russia needed another mascot for the Olympic Games in Sochi, Arnold Schwarzenegger would be it. The Hollywood star was in Moscow on Wednesday to promote his new movie "The Last Stand," which has its local release on Feb. 21. During the news conference, Schwarzenegger hurried to proclaim his love for Sochi, Moscow, Russia and Russian bodybuilders and in a reassuring gesture promised to come back to Russia for the Olympics.

Flamboyant Ukrainian showman and former Eurovision contestant Andrei Danilko, better known as his female alter ego Verka Serdyuchka, snatched up a Rolls-Royce that used to belong to Queen's legendary frontman, Freddie Mercury. Bidding by phone at the Birmingham auction on Saturday, Danilko bought the car for a reported 74,000 pounds ($117,340). The car passed on to the Ukrainian artist complete with the napkins that Mercury

kept in the glove compartment and is now awaiting its shipment to Kiev.

Nothing matches Manolo Blahniks like a brightly colored balaclava. The cable television network HBO, known for its stylish repertoire, bought the U.S. television rights to the documentary "Pussy Riot: A Punk Prayer" after it premiered at the annual Sundance Film Festival on Jan. 19. The feature-length documentary chronicles the trial of the provocative punk band trio and includes interviews with their families and lawyers. In the words of directors Maxim Pozdorovkin and Mike Lerner, it's a "good date movie."

What do you get a man who has everything, including perfect hearing? Some original music might do. Esteemed musicians from across the globe are lining up to present their new works as presents for Yury Bashmet's 60th anniversary. The Russian conductor and violinist is celebrating his birthday with a festival that will go on from Wednesday through Sunday in Moscow.

Alexei Vorobyov, Russia's 2011 Eurovision contestant and a popular actor, is in serious condition after a traffic accident in Los Angeles on Wednesday. The singer was riding in a convertible when his car was struck by another vehicle. According to the latest statements from his director, Vorobyov is in the emergency room with multiple bone fractures and a brain injury and is being readied for an operation.

As more proof that real estate agents are treasure chests full of unexpected information, a Moscow Times reporter was told this week that the Novy Arbat flat that sits right above one owned by the "Russian Frank Sinatra," Iosif Kobzon, costs 225,000 rubles per month to rent. Meanwhile, the five-room apartment below the singer's flat is for sale for 175 million rubles. The writer Arkady Vainer lived there at one point, though the apartment has since been upgraded to have three bathrooms, one with a jacuzzi.

Moscow's metro may not be getting any more spacious, but the company is determined to make the crammed commute at least more historically educational. The newest in the metro's makeover proposals is the installation of kiosks in lobbies and underground street crossings that are stylized to complement the architectural designs of the stations. For example, Kievskaya and Komsomolskaya stations would get Stalinist-style kiosks, while Mayakovskaya's kiosks would adopt the art-deco designs. This week also saw the launch of the contest to pick the newest Moscow metro map. Three designers are in the running.

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