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Moscow Theater by Numbers

By John Freedman

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Being a fan of Henry Miller, I love lists. Being an old sports aficionado, I love numbers and statistics. This week and in the months to come I propose to bring those two loves together on occasion in order to draw an unusual, if incomplete, picture of Russian theater. Today I focus exclusively on Moscow. I'll take on other locales in future posts.

0 — the number of people who actually know how many theaters and theater companies exist in Moscow. I have used the number of 115 for a couple of years now, but that is a guesstimate. I count 102 in the recent issue of Teatralnaya Afisha, but it doesn't list a few obvious venues (Teatr.doc, Polytheater and Praktika, for instance), and it misses several companies whose work comes at irregular intervals.

3 — the number of balconies at the Maly Theater. Technically speaking the theater has one balcony and two so-called tiers, but let's not be pedants.

4 — the number of shows in which you can see the great Inna Churikova perform at the Lenkom Theater — "The Lioness of Aquitaine," Tout Paye," "The City of Millionaires"

and "Lies for Salvation." Until recently she was in the cast of "The Marriage," but has since left that show.

8 — the number of productions staged by Rimas Tuminas at the Vakhtangov Theater since becoming its artistic director in 2007.

10 — the number of chief directors to run the renamed Pushkin Theater since 1950, following the closure by Soviet authorities of Alexander Tairov's famous Kamerny Theater in the same location on Tverskoi Bulvar in 1949. The current artistic director of the Pushkin is Yevgeny Pisarev.

12 — the number of Pyotr Fomenko productions still in repertory at the Fomenko Studio following his death in August 2012.

22.7 — the number of meters (74.48 feet) spanning the distance from the front to the back of the main stage of the Chekhov Moscow Art Theater on Kamergersky Pereulok.

30 — the number of productions currently in repertory at the Moscow Theater Yunogo Zritelya. Among them are six productions by artistic director Genrietta Yanovskaya and 11 by her husband Kama Ginkas.

35 — the number of days since playwright Ivan Vyrypayev officially took over Praktika Theater as artistic director. (This blog was posted on the fifth day of May.)

47 — the approximate number of dramatic productions of plays, stories and other texts by Anton Chekhov currently running in town. I say approximate because this number may be slightly low due to the way that repertory theaters work, often keeping shows running, although not playing them every month.

56 — the number of performances of Oleg Menshikov's production of Maksym Kurochkin's epic drama "Kitchen" between the opening in November 2000 and the last show in June 2002.

83 — the number of actors in the troupe of the Mayakovsky Theater.

90 — the number of years since the Mossoviet Theater was founded.

100 — the years between the founding of the Moscow Art Theater and the Playwright and Director Center. Alexei Kazantsev, the founder of the Playwright and Director Center, told me that he actually hurried the opening of the first show in late 1998 in order to open his theater exactly 100 years after Stanislavsky opened his.

103 — the total number of individuals — including actors, musicians, singers, dancers and performing technicians — who take the stage during a single performance of Dmitry Krymov's "Tararabumbia" at the School of Dramatic Art.

138 — the largest number of spectators I have ever counted at an event at Teatr.doc, a basement that comfortably seats around 50. Actually, on that day in September 2011, 137 spectators crammed into the space for a reading of Yury Muravitsky's "Pornography," and one more stood outside on the street and followed the reading through an open window.

650 — the number of rubles ($20.74) it costs to buy a ticket in the last row, far right corner, for the famous old production of "An Unusual Concert" at the Obraztsov Puppet Theater.

1,130 — a low estimate of the total number of dramatic productions currently running in Moscow. This is an impossible number to pin down because of the complexities of repertoire listings, but you get the idea. Moscow offers theatergoers choices.

1,535 — the number of seats in the cavernous large auditorium of the Russian Army Theater.

3,500 — the number of rubles ($111.70) needed to buy a single sixth row, center, seat to see Konstantin Raikin perform the title role in "King Lear" at the Satirikon Theater.

30,000,000 — the approximate number of dollars, perhaps a tad less, that it cost for the city of Moscow to build the spectacular School of Dramatic Art on Sretenka Ulitsa in 2001. If you have ever seen the building designed by Igor Popov and Anatoly Vasilyev, you know it was worth every penny.

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