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St. Petersburg Theater by Numbers

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Some time ago I put together an unorthodox picture of Moscow theater using numbers of various kinds. It's a hit-or-miss way of looking at a broad topic and it has no pretensions of providing a fully rounded portrait. On the other hand, the aggregation of some seemingly random figures does provide some curious insights. This week I apply the method to St. Petersburg theater.

0 — the number of times you will see performances this coming season at ON.TEATR, the important venue that gave kick starts to numerous directors, actors and playwrights over the last few seasons. The theater was closed by the authorities in June. 2013, for safety violations.

1 — the number of artistic directors to run the Little (Nebolshoi) Drama Theater since it was founded in 1999. Lev Erenburg is the only person to have held the post.

3 — the number of roles that Innokenty Smoktunovsky played at the Bolshoi Drama Theater between 1957 and 1960. It was his first, however, Prince Myshkin in "The Idiot," that caused

a nation to crown him a genius.

4 — the number of directors who have led the Theater of Comedy since the death of the great Nikolai Akimov in 1968. The four are, by name, Vadim Golikov, Pyotr Fomenko, Yury Aksyonov and the current artistic director Tatyana Kazakova.

5 — the total number of productions staged by Klim during his two brief St. Petersburg periods. They are Eugene O'Neill's "A Moon for the Misbegotten" at the Theater on Liteiny in 1996; "The Approach of a Golden Age," after Somerset Maugham, at the Otrkyty Theater in 1996; and William Congreve's "Love for Love" at the Theater on Liteiny, 1997; "Dream of Autumn" at Baltic House in 2003; "Why People Don't Fly" after Ostrovsky at the Theater on Liteiny in 2004.

6 — the number of years it took architect Giacomo Quarenghi to build the Hermitage Theater for Catherine the Great, from 1783 to 1789. The 240-seat hall intended exclusively for the Russian royal family and its guests is still a working venue.

7 — the approximate number of names by which St. Petersburg, Petrograd, and Leningrad audiences have known the venue which, since 1991, we have called the Theater on Liteiny. Some of its names have been Mozaika (1911-1912), the Liteiny Intimate Theater (1913), and the Theater of Working Youth (TRAM, 1928-1932). Directors who have worked here include Vsevolod Meyerhold, Nikolai Yevreinov, Lev Dodin, Kama Ginkas, Genrietta Yanovskaya, Grigory Dityatkovsky, Alexander Galibin and many others.

8 — the number of productions Dmitry Volkostrelov has staged for his Post Theater group (sometimes as co-productions with other theaters) since founding the organization in 2011.

9 — the number of productions mounted by Valery Fokin at the Alexandrinsky Theater since he was appointed artistic director in 2002.

11 — the number of actors comprising the troupe of the independent FMD Theater, based in the Dostoyevsky Museum.

14 — the number of St. Petersburg venues where Andrei Moguchy had staged theatrical works prior to his appointment as artistic director of the Bolshoi Drama Theater five months ago. Venues graced by Moguchy's work included his own Formal Theater, the Baltic House, Priyut Komedianta, the Mariinsky, the Alexandrinsky, the Circus on the Fontanka and eight nightclubs around town.

17 — the number of productions that Georgy Tovstonogov staged outside of Leningrad during his storied tenure as artistic director of the Bolshoi Drama Theater from 1956 to his death in 1989. Twelve of them were done abroad

22 — the number of times that Lev Dodin's famous production of "Brothers and Sisters" for the Maly Drama Theater has toured abroad since it was first staged 28 years ago.

23 — the number of the next Baltic House festival, scheduled to be held from Oct. 4 to 18. The first was held in 1991. The unifying theme for the 2013 festival is "Russians."

32 — the number of years that passed between the death of the great actress Vera

Komissarzhevskaya in 1910 and the opening in 1942 of the theater that now bears her name — the Komissarzhevskaya Theater on Italyanskaya Ulitsa.

39 — the total number of shows in repertory at the Youth Theater on the Fontanka at the close of the 2013 season. They included two plays by Shakespeare, two by Ostrovsky, two by Bulgakov, one by Ivan Vyrypayev and seven based on French works.

40 — the number of years that Alexander Bryantsev ran the Young Spectator Theater following its founding in 1921. It's one of the longest tenures of a theater head in Russian history.

43 — the number of years that Arkady Raikin's Variety and Miniature Theater performed in Leningrad (1939-1982) before his son Konstantin convinced him to move to Moscow and found the Satirikon Theater.

50 — the number of stage productions that the popular actress Alisa Freindlikh has appeared in since her debut at Leningrad's Komissarzhevskaya Theater in 1957.

72 — the official number of issues that the St. Petersburg Theater Journal has published since 1992. The actual number is 73 because the first issue bore the number 0.

80 — the number of seats in the small, but influential, Osobnyak Theater on Kamenoostrovsky Prospekt.

93 — number of theaters registered in St. Petersburg, as per the rosteatr site.

185 — the number of years that have passed since the building now housing the Lensoviet Theater was constructed in 1828. It actually did not become a theater until 1933.

1987 — the year that the theater known as Priyut Komedianta — the Actor's Shelter — was founded. It wasn't until 1995, however, that it took over the space it now occupies on Sadovaya Ulitsa.

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