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Russian Cultural Figures Jump to Putin's Defense on Crimea

By The Moscow Times

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Prominent Russian cultural figures, including the heads of many of the country's most recognized cultural institutions, signed an open letter expressing solidarity with President Vladimir Putin's policies on military intervention in Ukraine.

The 85 signatories of the letter, which was published in Izvestia on Tuesday, include figures such as Irina Antonova, president of the Pushkin Museum; Vladimir Urin, director of the Bolshoi Theater; and Zurab Tsereteli, president of the Russian Academy of Arts.

Prominent musicians and artists such as conductors Denis Matsuev, Vladimir Spivakov and Valery Gergiyev, director Fyodor Bondarchuk, and even Georgian ballet dancer Nikolai Tsiskaridze also signed the letter.

The letter came shortly after film union Kino Soyuz expressed opposition to Russian government policies on Ukraine in their own open letter published on March 8.

The short text of the letter reads as follows: "In these days when the fate of Crimea and our countrymen is being decided, Russian cultural figures cannot be indifferent, coldhearted observers. Our shared history and roots, our cultural and its spiritual roots, our fundamental values and language have united us forever. We hope the shared aspects of our peoples will have a lasting future. For this reason, we firmly express our support for the position of the president of the Russian Federation on Ukraine and Crimea."

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