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Legendary Director Yuri Lyubimov Hospitalized With Heart Failure

By The Moscow Times

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Yuri Lyubimov

The celebrated stage director Yuri Lyubimov, founder of Moscow's legendary Taganka Theater and a People's Artist of Russia, has been hospitalized with heart failure, according to his wife.

The 97-year-old artist "began to feel ill [on Thursday] evening and at his doctors' insistence was taken to a hospital," Lyubimov's wife, Katalin, was quoted as saying by the TASS news agency.

Lyubimov's hospitalization comes just days after he celebrated his birthday on Tuesday, when he had hoped to receive news that his former office and archives at the Taganka Theater would be turned into a museum-style "memorial zone," Katalin Lyubimova told TASS.

"[Lyubimov] was eagerly waiting, had high hopes, but he received only flowers

and congratulations," she was quoted as saying. "No specific response to his request for creating a memorial zone ever came."

Lyubimov, considered one of the greatest names in Russian theater, headed the Taganka for five decades after taking over as the stage director of what was then known as the Moscow Drama and Comedy Theater in 1964.

During this time, he brought in an array of new actors and reshaped the theater's performances — drawing critical acclaim and a long lines for tickets, as well as the irk of the Soviet authorities.

Lyubimov was stripped of his Soviet citizenship in 1984 but continued to work abroad in Europe, the U.S. and Israel. His citizenship was reinstated in the late 1980s, under then-Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, and he returned to the Taganka, where he worked up until 2011.

The Taganka Theater has played host to many celebrated Russian artists, including poet, musician and actor Vladimir Vysotsky, who worked there from 1964 to his death in 1980.

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