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12 Things to See on Moscow's Theater Night

By John Freedman

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For the third year in a row on March 26, the eve of World Theater Day, most of Moscow's theaters — a total of over 70 — will throw open their doors, their backstages and their archives to their fans. The general theme for this year's Night in Theater program, run by the Moscow Culture Committee, is the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II.

What that means in practical purposes is that if you are lucky enough to sign up to join your favorite Moscow playhouse on Thursday night, you will have the opportunity to experience things you may never have dreamed of.

One theater plans to resurrect a banned production from the 1960s. Another will (try to) teach you how to draw. A third will provide a master class in makeup. Many venues plan to offer meetings with the directors and actors who work on their stages.

Sign-ups for the events take place on the website of each individual theater.

The following are just some of the programs on offer, in no particular order:

The new Stanislavsky Electrotheater, run by Boris Yukhananov, will provide tours of its spectacularly renovated building beginning at 10:30 p.m. Originally built as a movie theater around 1912, it was a musical theater and then a dramatic theater in later decades. Yukhananov had cutting-edge architects gut the whole building and bring it into the 21st century. It's definitely a tour you won't forget. A concert will follow the tours. stanislavskydrama.ru.

The Southwest Theater Studio will show a video-film of one of its greatest productions from the late 1980s — Alexander Sukhovo-Kobylin's entire 19th-century trilogy of black comedies, including "Krechinsky's Wedding," "The Trial" and "The Death of Tarelkin." It was one of the first times the three plays had ever been staged as one, and — take note — the film runs from 11 p.m. to 3 a.m. teatr-uz.ru.

The Theater Na Maloi Bronnoi begins its Night in Theater with a master class conducted by its top makeup artists. That begins at 11:15 p.m. When that portion of the evening is concluded, the theater will offer an open reading of Svetlana Alexiyevich's classic Soviet play "War Does Not Have a Woman's Face." mbronnaya.theatre.ru.

Mikhail Derzhavin's Satire Theater has a special evening in store, which is planned to run from approximately 10:45 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. It will pull the old, banned production of Alexander Tvardovsky's "Tyorkin in the Other World" out of mothballs by way of a play reading, the reading of official documents and the reminiscences of those who were there to see this historical, but virtually unknown, production end its life after just two or three showings in 1966. satire.ru.

Surely one of the coolest events will take place at Moscow's fabulous **Ten, or Shadow, Theater**. Beginning at 9 p.m. sharp, artistic director Ilya Epelbaum will undertake to teach everyone who comes how to draw and paint, whether or not they have any prior experience or, even talent. ttttttttt.ru.

Genrietta Yanovskaya and her husband Kama Ginkas will host an "interactive meeting" at their Theater Yunogo Zritelya titled "We Reminisce Together." This pair, two of the most famous former students of the great Georgy Tovstonogov, have lived an extraordinary life in theater. They will share some of those memories and encourage spectators to share their own memories of time spent in the theater. Expect the evening to run from 10 p.m. until after midnight. moscowtyz.ru.

The Helicon Opera, which is still located on Novy Arbat, although it will soon be returning to its original home on Bolshaya Nikitskaya Ulitsa, will provide a two-pronged evening starting at 10:30 p.m. with a special concert titled "Songs of War and Peace," and concluding with a meeting with artistic director Dmitry Bertman. helikon.ru.

The Pushkin Theater on Tverskoi Bulvar will offer what it calls a "thematic excursion" of the theater grounds beginning at 10:30 p.m., and will follow that sometime after 11 p.m. with a meeting with artistic director Yevgeny Pisarev. teatrpushkin.ru.

The Fomenko Workshop Theater has one of the biggest and longest programs in store. Things

kick off at 11 p.m. with a tour of the spectacular new building. Following that, the plan is to show the entire four-part film "For the Rest of Our Lives," a film made for television in 1975 by the late Pyotr Fomenko on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the end of World War II. If you last for the entire film, plan to be in the theater until approximately 6 a.m. fomenko.theatre.ru.

Kirill Serebrennikov's Gogol Center will also offer up films, in this case, two involving the great British director Peter Brook: "Brook on Brook" and "The Tragedy of Hamlet," a film of Brook's great production of Shakespeare. The first begins to roll at 9 p.m. gogolcenter.ru.

The Sovremennik Theater will offer an open reading of Polina Barskova's "Living Pictures," based on real events that took place during the Siege of Leningrad. This event begins at 9 p.m. sovremennik.ru.

Sergei Zhenovach's Studio of Theatrical Art offers one of the more unusual events of the night and day. The well-known photographer Alexander Ivanishin, whose photos have appeared in The Moscow Times for over two decades, will talk about his profession, his experiences and his approach to his work. The discussion begins at 10 p.m. sti.ru.

A complete listing of all the city's events can be accessed on the website of the Moscow Culture Committee. Drop down to the link titled, in Russian, "Program of the action: Night in Theater." kultura.mos.ru.

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