

Donetsk and Lugansk Theaters to Tour Russia

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Donetsk Opera and Ballet Theater

Russia's Ministry of Culture will pay theater, opera and ballet troupes from the separatist-controlled Lugansk and Donetsk regions of eastern Ukraine to tour Russia this summer and fall.

The ministry will support tours by the Donetsk Opera and Ballet Theater, the Luhansk Music and Drama Theater, the Youth Theater of Donetsk, the Pavel Luspekaev Theater of Lugansk, the Donetsk Puppet Theater, the Donetsk Music and Drama Theater and the Luhansk Philharmonic, pro-government daily Izvestia reported Wednesday.

In a statement to Izvestia, the Ministry of Culture called the tours "the least we can do for the people who today came to the defense of our common historical and cultural values."

The idea for tours by the theaters in the separatist regions was first suggested in March in a

presentation to Culture Minister Vladimir Medinsky.

At the time, Medinsky was skeptical of the proposal, saying that people attending performances by these theaters should go with realistic expectations. "People should understand that they are not going to the Bolshoi Theater or the Moscow Art Theater ... they go to the theater of a country that miraculously survived 25 years of neglect, and then a year of civil war," Medinsky said, according to a press release on the Culture Ministry's website.

In Moscow, the Donetsk Opera and Ballet Theater will present a series of performances beginning June 1 at the Russian Academic Youth Theater (RAMT) on Teatralnaya Ploshchad.

Donetsk Opera and Ballet Theater deputy head choreography Valery Popov told Izvestia that the troupe is planning to perform "La Sylphide," the adagio from "Romeo and Juliet," and scenes from "Le Corsaire."

"Unfortunately we are unable to present a full production because the company has been split by the situation in the region," Popov said, according to the paper. "But we very much want to show quality work and not embarrass ourselves. Our theater has always had a good reputation in Russia."

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