

Russian Orchestra Holds Concert in Ruined City of Palmyra

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Conductor Valery Gergiev

An orchestra from Russia's famed Mariinsky theater held a performance in the ancient ruins of the Syrian city of Palmyra on Thursday evening.

The concert was organized in memory of Alexander Prokhorenko, a Russian soldier who died while fighting to retake the city in March. The soldier called air strikes on his own position after being surrounded by Islamic State fighters.

The concert was also a celebration of victory after Russian-backed Syrian soldiers freed the city from Islamic State control.

An international UNESCO delegation visited the ancient site earlier in the day to pledge their help in reconstructing the area. The 4,000-year-old settlement was taken by Islamic State forces in May 2015. The group held mass executions in the ruins and destroyed a number

of ancient statues.

Russian representatives included Culture Minister Vladimir Medinsky, as well as musician and friend of President Vladimir Putin, Sergei Roldugin.

The concert, titled "With a prayer from Palmyra: Music revives the ancient walls" was conducted by celebrated maestro Valery Gergiev.

Roldugin, a professional cellist, took to the stage to perform in the concert.

The Islamic State is a terrorist organization banned in Russia.

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