

# Moscow Theater: Seven Productions for After the Summer

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## Muller Machine

Moscow is still a city where the theater draws the crowds as much as any concert, film or exhibition. So that you didn't have to, we took ourselves to last season's premieres and scouted out the best productions making a return this autumn. Sharpen those elbows and get yourself to the box office — you can thank us later.

## Muller Machine

*The most scandalous play of the season*

Let's get the main thing out of the way: yes, throughout the performance of this play the stage background is dominated by a group of dancing nude models. Directed by Kirill Serebrennikov, "Muller Machine" is based on "Quartet" and "Hamletmachine," two plays by Heiner Muller. "Quartet" is a compact version of Choderlos de Laclos' "Dangerous

Liaisons” with all the characters played by two actors and gender roles reversed. Konstantin Bogomolov and Sati Spivakova play the main roles. “Hamletmachine” is loosely based on Shakespeare’s “Hamlet,” condensed into several monologues devoted to the state of world affairs. Alexander Gorchilin, one of the best actors at Gogol Center, plays the central protagonist.

*Gogol Center. 8 Ulitsa Kazakova, Metro Kurskaya.*  
[gogolcenter.com](http://gogolcenter.com) Sept. 18, 19

## Pasternak. My Sister Life

*A life in poems*

This play about Pasternak’s life is directed by Maxim Didenko, best known for his unorthodox and post-modernist productions based on Daniil Kharmis and Isaac Babel’s works. There’s plenty of cultural references in this play if you’re following carefully enough. Intentional or otherwise, some scenes are reminiscent of Tarkovsky, while others remind you of something from Spider-Man. Watch out for the symbolic moment when a Stalin-like figure begins walking around on the stage. The production is accompanied by atmospheric music from Ivan Kushnir, which sounds like a mix between Massive Attack and DJ Shadow.

*Gogol Center. 8 Ulitsa Kazakova, Metro Kurskaya.*  
[gogolcenter.com](http://gogolcenter.com) Oct. 5, 6

## 24 Plus

*Documentary theater*

Written and directed by Mikhail Ugarov, “24 plus” refers to a non-existent age restriction. In this bold interpretation of love and lust in Moscow, a wife having an affair suggests to her husband and lover that they try living together. Can real love survive in such a complex triangle? Alongside the main plot, “24 Plus” also tells stories of the main characters’ ex-lovers, and here the actors relay their actual personal experiences. Don’t be surprised, it’s called “documentary theater” (Teatr.doc) after all.

*Teatr.doc. 12 Maly Kazenny Pereulok. Metro Kurskaya. [teatrdoc.ru](http://teatrdoc.ru) Aug. 20, 27*

## SWAN

*The world but not as we know it*



“SWAN” is a play in verse about a dystopian Russian future. For an immigrant to be naturalized in Russia they have to win a poetry battle because “Russia is a land of poets.” Directed by Yury Kvyatkovsky, one Moscow’s most promising young directors, it’s only fitting that the play will be staged this autumn at the Meyerhold Center (TsIM) — one of the leading experimental theaters in the city. “SWAN” is part political satire, part poetry and if you’re not quite sold, TsIM also gives theater fans the opportunity to attend rehearsals before the show at no extra charge.

*TsIM. 23 Ulitsa Novoslobodskaya*  *Metro Mendeleyevskaya, Novoslobodskaya.*  
[meyerhold.ru](http://meyerhold.ru)  *Sept. 19, 20* 

## Don't Leave Your Planet

*A re-imagining of The Little Prince*

This interpretation of the iconic book by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry stars Konstantin Khabensky — one of the most popular actors in Russia — playing the role of every character. Director Viktor Kramer's version of "The Little Prince" is more gritty and less celestial than the original. Special effects and video art compliment the modern interpretation of the childhood classic. The performance is also accompanied by music from composers Johannes Brahms and Gustav Mahler, played by the Grammy Award winners Yuri Bashmet and his "Soloists of Moscow" orchestra.

*Sovremennik, On the stage of Mossoviet Theatre. 16 Ulitsa Bolshaya Sadovaya*  *Metro Mayakovskaya.* [sovremennik.ru](http://sovremennik.ru)  *Oct. 21, 22*

## Psychosis

*Dark, disturbing and inventive*

One of the most anticipated premieres of last season, "Psychosis" is as much an experiment as it is a theater production. The director is Alexander Zeldovich — best known for his films based on Vladimir Sorokin's dystopian screenplays — while visuals for the backdrop were provided by AES+F, Russia's most famous group of video artists. Based on Sarah Kane's "4.48 Psychosis," the play chronicles a case of clinical depression through the monologues of 19 different women. Kane's lines are both powerful and disturbing, especially when accompanied by AES+F's vivid imagery which oscillates between happiness and vulgarity. The production is accompanied by English subtitles.

*Electro Theater. 23 Tverskaya Ulitsa, Metro Pushkinskaya, Tverskaya.*  
[electrotheatre.ru](http://electrotheatre.ru)  
*Oct. 8, 9.10*

## The Colonel Bird

*War and peace in the mountains*

The Electro Theater series of productions from the rising directoral talent starts with "The Colonel Bird," directed by Roman Drobot. The play was written by Bulgarian Hristo Boytchev and is set during the Balkan wars of the 1990s. An old monastery in the mountains houses a psychiatric ward which gets cut off from supplies. A UN airplane accidentally drops a shipment of uniforms meant for peacekeepers on the grounds of the ward leading to a scenario in which one of the patients — a former Soviet colonel — molds his companions into a military unit and helps them recover. In today's world of never-ending conflicts, Boytchev's pacifist message from the 1990s is well-timed.

*Electro Theater. ☒23 Tverskaya Ulitsa, ☒Metro Pushkinskaya, Tverskaya.*

[electrotheatre.ru](http://electrotheatre.ru)

*Performance schedule to be announced*

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