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# The Tall Brothers Circus Takes Moscow By Stilts

By Alexander Bratersky

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**Tall Brothers**

Firefighters dressed in old-fashioned uniforms walk on stilts high above VDNKh Park as clowns who look like Marx Brothers characters — except for one, who looks like a Pope — juggle balls. The performers seem like traditional clowns, but they act more like theater actors from a small street theater around the corner.

The performers are a part of the Tall Brothers (Vysokiye Bratya) circus group — a circus, theater and street art troupe all combined into one.

A group of ten circus artists founded the Tall Brothers in 2007. They first performed on stilts, their trademark feature, but later expanded their repertory: "There was a moment when we started to feel constrained within that framework, so we added walking characters, musical instruments and started clowning around," Denis Vasiliev, head of the Tall Brothers, said in an interview.

Vasiliev studied drama in theater school, but he⊠realized he was more interested in following in the footsteps of his brother, who⊠was a professional clown. That inspired him to create "drama clowning," a genre⊠inspired by old-fashioned clowns and the atmosphere of Federico Fellini movies.⊠

The group's videos, which are accessible on their⊠site, are stylized to look like they were done in the 1930s, and are reminiscent⊠of Charlie Chaplin's classical performances. ⊠

Today the group performs several stage pantomime plays⊠from children's fairy tales and adult dramas. One called "If Only There Were No⊠Children" is loosely based on "Waiting for Godot" by Samuel Beckett.

Their innovative and often bizarre clowning style has won⊠them popularity with younger viewers, who aren't drawn to the classical⊠Russian circus.

The circus has also won praise from actor Mikhail Gorevoi,⊠who appears as a special guest in one of their shows. Gorevoi is familiar to⊠Western audiences from his roles in the James Bond movie "Die Another Day" and Steven⊠Spielberg's "Bridge of Spies." Gorevoi even said that he wants to start a clown⊠school with the group.

"They are a very unique troupe with a paradoxical and maybe⊠even illogical view of life. The audience experiences all kinds of emotions⊠from sadness to irony to hysterical laughter,' Yevgeny Aryev, the group's⊠spokesperson, told The Moscow Times.

The Tall Brothers are performing this weekend, Nov. 25⊠and 26, at their theater. Performances begin at a child-friendly 6 p.m. Tickets⊠available online or at the door.

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