

2020: The Year in Culture

A few of the most anticipated events on the Moscow cultural scene

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The Russian Ministry of Culture has named 2020 as the year of Memory and Glory, and also dedicated it to the 150th anniversary of the birth of writer Ivan Bunin; the year of traditional crafts; the year of intellectual property and inventiveness, and the year of fathers. How these themes will be brought to life in the Russian arts is not yet known, but museums, theaters, concert halls, film studios and publishing houses are making their own plans for the year. Here are a few of the events in Moscow's cultural life in 2020 that we are definitely looking forward to.

Bolshoi Theater

At the Bolshoi, the main premiere of the spring season is "Sadko" on February 14. It's a new take on Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's opera based on a Russian folk tale about a merchant and gusli musician from Novgorod and his adventures in the sea world. Dmitry Tcherniakov is the

director and Timur Zangiev serves as the conductor. Other 2020 premieres include Mozart's opera "Don Giovanni" and a ballet based on Mikhail Bulgakov's perennial classic, "Master and Margarita."

Stanislavsky & Nemirovich-Danchenko Musical Theater

The main premiere at the Musical Theatre this season is without question the opera "Der Freischütz" (The Marksman or The Freeshooter) by German composer Carl Maria von Weber, which will take place in May. Conducted by Fabrice Bollon from France and directed by Alexander Titel, it will be the first time that "Der Freischütz" will be produced on a Moscow stage in more than a century. Among other notable premieres are one-act ballet, produced by the Spanish choreographer Goyo Montero, Director of the Nuremberg Ballet (March) and Russian premiere of Akram Khan's ballet "Kaash" (June)

Tretyakov Gallery

The Tretyakov Gallery, arguably the best museum of Russian art, will start the new season with an exhibition devoted to fairy tales. "The Russian fairy tale from Vasnetsov to the present" will open at the New Tretyakov Gallery in February and will feature works by Victor Vasnetsov, Ivan Bilibin, Vasily Polenov, Mikhail Vrubel, as well as contemporary artists.

Pushkin Fine Arts Museum

The Pushkin Museum has big plans for 2020, including the first ever solo exhibition of Bill Viola in Russia, one of the most influential American video artists living today, featuring more than 20 works (July-November). Another highlight is an exhibition on the phenomenon of tattoos, organized in cooperation with the Quai Branly Museum in Paris (March-May).

Garage Museum of Contemporary Art

In 2020 Garage Museum will hold the Triennial of Russian Contemporary Art for the second time. The second edition's theme is "A Beautiful Night for All the People" and the participants will be chosen by artists who took part in the first triennial in 2017. There will also be parallel projects implemented in several Russian regions.

Moscow Museum of Modern Art (MMOMA)

Apart from the traditional Moscow International Biennale for Young Art, MMOMA's 2020 program's main highlight is the large-scale retrospective exhibition of the world-famous artist Michelangelo Pistoletto, one of the leaders of the Italian Arte Povera movement (June - September).

Theater of Nations

The Theater of Nations has two important premieres coming up in March 2020: "Submission" on the small stage, based on the novel by French writer Michel Houellebecq and produced by up-and-coming director Talgat Batalov; and "The Village of Stepanchikovo and its Inhabitants" after Fyodor Dostoyevsky's satire. This is directed by Evgeny Marchelli, one of Russia's most prominent directors who until recently headed the Volkov Theater in Yaroslavl.

Gogol Center

One of the most anticipated premieres of 2019/20 season is “The Petrovs In and Around the Flu” at the Gogol Center. Based on the bestselling, award-winning mystical novel by Alexei Salnikov, “The Petrovs In and Around the Flu” was originally supposed to be directed by Kirill Serebrennikov, Gogol Center’s embattled head, who spent almost two years under house arrest. But later Serebrennikov decided to produce a film version of “The Petrovs In and Around the Flu.” As a result, the theater production is directed by Anton Fyodorov, but Serebrennikov is still billed as the “author of adaptation.”

Electrotheater

One of the most innovative and avant-garde theaters in Moscow, Electrotheater prepared several surprises for 2020, including “Seraph’s Book” — a mixture of Fyodor Dostoevsky’s novel “Demons” and William Blake’s poem “The Book of Thel,” written and directed by contemporary Russian composer Alexander Belousov (February), and Marfa Gorvits’ post-apocalyptic fairytale “Cricket” based on children’s stories by Dutch writer Toon Tellegen (June).

Praktika

Praktika theater, which recently became the home of the famous Brusnikin’s Workshop company, will present its brand-new production “To Plant a Tree” based on a play by Alexei Zhitkovsky in January. Directed by Marina Brusnikina, the wife of late director and head of Praktika Dmitry Brusnikin, it tells a story of intergenerational relations and the two main roles are played by Mikhail and Nikolai Yefremov, father and son in a well-known actor dynasty.

Film

One of the most anticipated films of 2020 is “Petrov's Flu” directed by Kirill Serebrennikov. The movie is based on a bestselling novel “The Petrovs In and Around the Flu” by Alexei Salnikov, which received two of the most important literature awards in Russia. Its plot revolves around a family of Petrovs in Yekaterinburg and their rather mystical adventures during a flu epidemic. Another premiere everyone’s looking forward to is a feature length version of “Dau” by Ilya Khrzhanovsky, one of the most ambitious projects ever undertaken in cinema, devoted to the life of the famous scientist Lev Landau, played by opera singer and conductor Teodor Currentzis. The film currently exists in the format of a video installation. “Medea” by Aleksandr Zeldovich is one more highlight of 2020, a Greek tragedy transposed into today’s Moscow with Evgeny Tsyganov and Tinatin Dalakishvili playing the main roles.

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