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Renowned Soviet Singer Lev Leshchenko Tests Positive for Coronavirus

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Lev Leshchenko, 78, is best-known for his rendition of "Den Pobedy (Victory Day)" and the closing ceremony song from the 1980 Moscow Summer Olympics. **Andrei Nikerichev / Moskva News Agency**

Renowned Soviet singer Lev Leshchenko has tested positive for the coronavirus, the head doctor at the Moscow hospital treating coronavirus patients confirmed Friday.

Leshchenko, 78, is one of the most high-profile Russian celebrities to test positive for the virus and is best-known for his rendition of "Den Pobedy (Victory Day)" and the closing ceremony song from the 1980 Moscow Summer Olympics. On Thursday, prominent Russian writer Boris Akunin, 63, said he has also been infected with the "fashionable disease."

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Leshchenko had given doctors permission to make his diagnosis public, said Denis Protsenko, the head physician at Moscow's infectious diseases hospital in Kommunarka.

“In the first day after he was admitted, the patient's condition worsened: his shortness of breath increased and blood oxygen decreased. We took him to the intensive care ward for treatment,” Protsenko said.

The Soviet crooner’s condition has since stabilized and improved, Protsenko said.

“They’re not letting me in there [to visit him]. But the improvement is obvious, everything is fine,” comedian Vladimir Vinokur, a friend of Leshchenko, told the RBC news website Friday.

Leshchenko and his wife were brought to the hospital at Kommunarka earlier this week and were later diagnosed with pneumonia, prompting media speculation that he could have the coronavirus.

On Friday, actor and Moscow City Duma deputy Nikolai Gubenko, 79, was also hospitalized at the clinic in Kommunarka with pneumonia, his colleague in the city council told RBC.

Russia has confirmed 1,036 coronavirus cases as of Friday. Earlier this week, Moscow’s top infectious diseases official warned of a possible “explosive” development of the coronavirus crisis nationwide.

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