

‘Scary to Predict’: Bolshoi Theater Warns of Closure if Coronavirus Lockdown Persists

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The Bolshoi canceled all performances, concerts and tours until April 30 due to the pandemic that has infected more than 10,000 people in Russia and 1.5 million worldwide. **Kirill Zykov / Moskva News Agency**

Moscow’s legendary Bolshoi Theater has warned that it is at risk of closing down if the city’s coronavirus lockdown doesn’t end by September, its director Vladimir Urin said in an interview published Thursday.

The Bolshoi [canceled](#) all performances, concerts and tours until April 30 due to the pandemic that has infected more than 10,000 people in Russia and 1.5 million worldwide. The theater started streaming past performances of its classic productions, including “Swan Lake” and “The Sleeping Beauty” ballets, in late March.

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“If we don’t open in September, it’s scary to predict what may happen, up to the theater’s destruction,” Urin [told](#) the Kommersant business daily. “Not the building, of course.”

In the best-case scenario, he said the Bolshoi will reopen in late June or July. At least five of its productions scheduled to premiere over the next three seasons — including a [joint staging](#) of “Aida” with New York’s Metropolitan Opera — have been scrapped, he said.

Urin estimated the theater's losses since its closure at 9 million rubles (\$114,000) per day.

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He also predicted that the economic impact of the coronavirus outbreak could slash demand for Bolshoi’s next season and force it to lower ticket prices. He threw into question the salaries of Bolshoi’s 3,400 employees as Moscow’s shutdown continues.

The Bolshoi is among dozens of the world’s theaters and operas that have shut their doors to the public and streamed performances online to help stem the spread of Covid-19.

Urin called the Bolshoi’s streams of past performances a “humanitarian gesture” during the pandemic, but warned that “we’ve got a very difficult process of returning the audience to the theater ahead of us.”

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