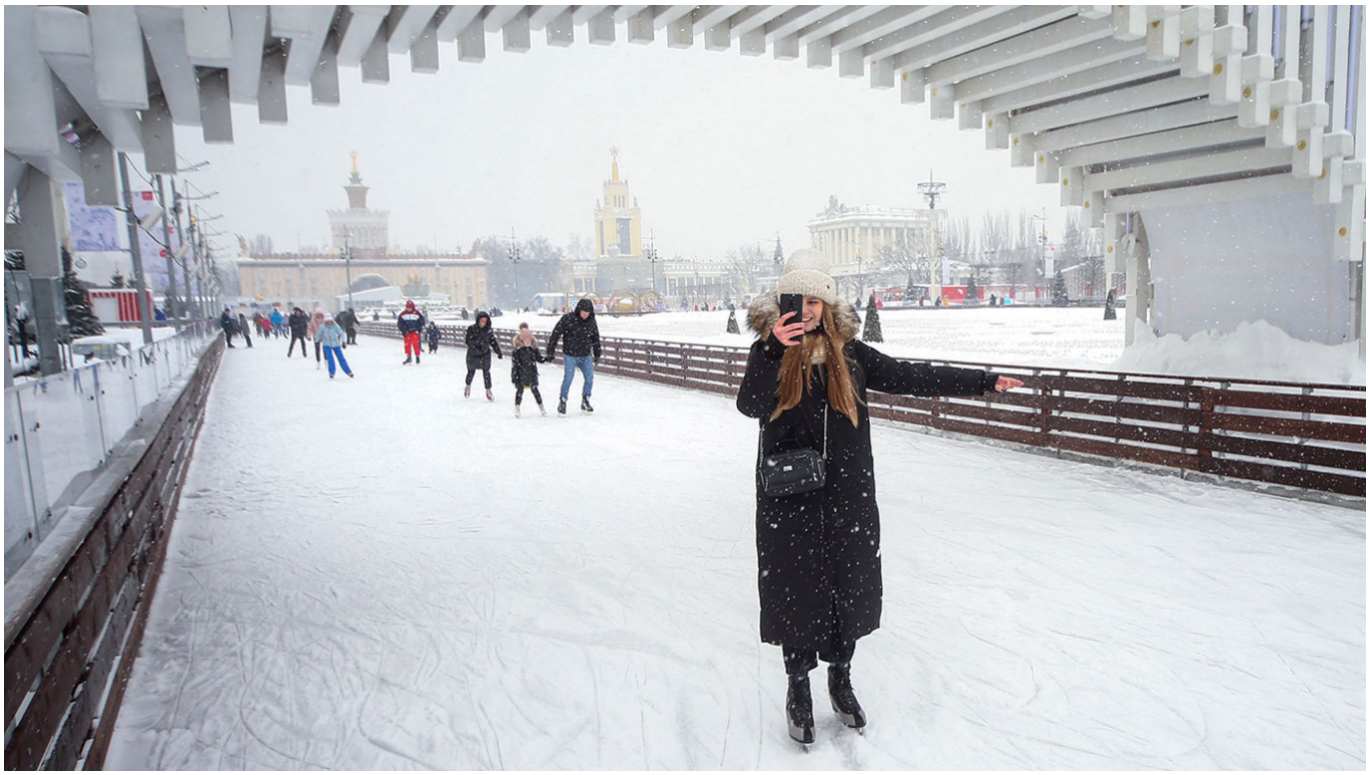
The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

What's On in Moscow Nov. 26-28

Our picks for the weekend and beyond.

November 26, 2021



Sergei Vedyashkin / Moskva News Agency

Go skating at VDNKh

Winter begins on Friday at 5 p.m. — or at least the rink at VDNKh Park opens, which is a sure sign that winter is here. The rink is the largest in Moscow, if not the world, at 53,000 square meters (that's 570,487 square feet or almost the size of 12 American football fields). The rink will be open 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. on weekdays and 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. on weekends and holidays, but note: there is a break from 3 to 5 p.m. to clean the ice every day. Tickets must be purchased online ahead of time for a particular time slot. On arrival, your temperature will be checked, but at present there is no QR code requirement. You can either rent skates or bring your own, and there are almost a dozen places for a snack or meal. The rink will have special events for holidays, including New Year's, Student Day, and Valentine's Day and be open, weather permitting, until Feb. 27, 2022. And if your skates need to be sharpened before you start the season — no worries. There's a sharpening stand on site.

See “Juno and Avos” three ways

In 1981 the Russian theater world experienced something of a creative earthquake: the first Russian rock opera was performed at the Lenkom Theater. And not only was it an opera involving rock music, it told the tale of love between a Russian and an American, which was unthinkable — even if it took place in the distant past. “Juno and Avos” was written by Alexei Rybnikov with a libretto by poet Andrei Voznesensky, based on a poem called “Avos” he wrote in 1970. In Voznesensky’s telling of a tale that had some basis in fact, in 1806 the nobleman Nikolai Rezanov leads a Russian naval expedition to California on the ships Juno and Avos. There he meets and falls in love with Conchita, the daughter of the Spanish governor of California. Although she is promised to another, they fall in love and secretly become engaged, and Rezanov sails home to ask the tsar’s permission to marry a Catholic. But he dies on the way. When Conchita learns the news, she enters a convent, where she spends the rest of her life.

The main roles were performed by Nikolai Karachentsov and Yelena Shanina. The show was a tremendous hit in Russia and around the world, where it was warmly received in a pre-glasnost glow of good feelings.

This week you can immerse yourself in world of Nikolai and Conchita. First head over to the Kazan Train Station where the Voznesensky Center has organized a remarkable exhibition about the rock opera, with bits of scenery, sketches of costumes, and much more. It will be up until Dec. 15. You can read more about it and register your visit here.

After entering into the spirit of these star-crossed lovers at the Kazan Train Station, on Nov. 30 you can see a revival of the show at the theater where it premiered: Lenkom. Originally directed by Mark Zakharov, today it stars Dmitry Pevstov and Alexandra Volkova. Tickets are available on the Lenkom site here and on other ticket platforms.

Finally, on Dec. 2 at 7:30 p.m., the Voznesensky Center is showing the film “Juno and Avos: The Hallelujah of Love.” This documentary by Andrei Zheleznyakov is a film-about-a-film – about the making of the film version of the rock opera in 1983, directed by Zakharov and starring Karachentsov, Alexander Abdulov, and Irina Alfyorova. You can listen to a fascinating discussion about the opera, the performers, the film, 1980s Soviet culture and why this was such a big hit. Information and registration here.

Or if you can’t wait that long, you can watch the original film version of the opera online here.

See a play in English

On Dec. 2 at 7 p.m., the Sobytie Theater is hosting “Walking After You,” an English-language play written, directed and performed by members of the expat community and English-speaking Muscovites. The play is about falling in love, or trying to, while those voices in your head sometimes have other ideas. It was written by Matthew Walker and directed by Josh Wilson, an award-winning Canadian performance artist, improvisor and director. The four actors are Jordan Worsely, Daria Babich, Fernando Moreno and Vera Sapunova. The play is rated 18+ for its mature themes and sexuality. More information and ticket sales can be found here.

Get a jump on the holidays

There is no reason for Russia to have Black Friday and Cyber Monday sales. Russia doesn't celebrate Thanksgiving, and hence Russia doesn't have a day off the day after Thanksgiving, which is the kick-off for Christmas shopping. In fact, Russia doesn't even celebrate Christmas until Jan. 7, so there is no rush. But none of this matters. Today is Black Friday, and if you want to buy anything on sale, and if you have patience with crowds — hit the malls or sit at your computer and order online. Even supermarkets are running Black Friday specials. Stock up on buckwheat groats!

Meanwhile, think about buying tickets for the big holiday opera and ballet events. On Saturday you can buy tickets for December at the Bolshoi Theater, including for "Peter and the Wolf" and "Nutcracker." Tickets are available for "The Snow Maiden" at the Stanislavsky Nemerovich-Danchenko Musical Theater, as well as for the charming operetta "A Winter Evening in Chamonix." The Kremlin Palace also has a fine "Nutcracker," and you and your children might like "Hansel and Gretel" at Novaya Opera in January. And everyone will like "The Christmas Ball" on Dec. 24 at Helikon Opera.

Pace yourself! This is only the beginning.

A night at the movies

This week the movie scene is suspiciously about places, people, and lives far away or only existing in the imagination, which might say something about everyone's need for serious escapism. For kids there is the animated film "Encanto" about a family with magical abilities in a Columbian rain forest who find themselves in danger, or "Ghostbusters Afterlife" about, well, kids from families who had ghost-busting abilities that have perhaps been passed down over the generations - along with a very cool car. For older folks there is a pandemic road trip movie called "Recovery" involving plucky young women and a grandmother in a home for the elderly, and a strange, scary movie involving time travel, sort of, or sleep visions, sort of, and a murder in the 1960s - and fabulous actors - called "Last Night in Soho." If none of that suits, you can still escape to "Dune."

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