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New Year Arts Highlights in Russia's Regions

This year go far from Moscow and St. Petersburg to see cutting-edge culture.

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"L'amour de loin" (Love from Afar) **Olga Kereliuk / uralopera.ru**

Travel restrictions due to covid might have kept Russians staying in the country, but they also helped them discover some great places to vacation and enjoy cultural activities. The practice of inviting innovative directors and performers to such places as Perm, Ekaterinburg, Voronezh, Ivanovo, and Tula has become popular in opera and ballet, while local contemporary artists are forming art clusters that are actively changing the life of the cities. In fact, outside the capitals you can get a glimpse of some art so revolutionary that Moscow and St. Petersburg might not be brave or avant-garde enough to put it on.

Here are our picks for culture-packed trips to the Russian provinces in 2022.

“Boris Godunov” in Krasnodar: a true premiere

Why not go and experience the warm winter in the Kuban region and see the premiere of Modest Mussorgsky’s “Boris Godunov” at the Krasnodar Musical Theater? The premiere will be held Feb. 18-20 with Dmitry Kryukov conducting and Olga Ivanova directing the opera, Victor Gerasimenko as set designer and Ekaterina Mironova organizing movement — the opera engages 200 artists of opera and ballet.

This particular production of “Boris Godunov” is unique on several counts. For the first time in the history of the opera, the scene of the people’s revolt and their jubilation at the arrival of the Impostor — the scene is called Sokolniki on Dnepr in Mussorgsky’s score — will be included. This will also be the world premiere of the composer’s orchestration of two scenes: the Fountain Scene and Sokolniki on Dnepr. The new production is the result of Krasnodar Musical Theater’s research collaboration with the State Institute of Art, which is preparing the full academic edition of Mussorgsky’s work, specifically the musicologists Nadezhda Teterina and Evgeny Levashyov. See the site for tickets and more information.

Celebrate Kandinsky Prize winners at Arsenal in Nizhny Novgorod’s Kremlin

To mark the end of Nizhny Novgorod’s 800th anniversary celebration, the Breus Foundation has opened a retrospective exhibition of the best artists of the 21st century at Arsenal in Nizhny Novgorod’s Kremlin. Fourteen art objects by artists who won the prize from 2007-2021 and were selected by experts from the Kandinsky Prize council — including curator and art historian Jean-Huber Martin, art critic Bernard Blistène and art critic Robert Storr — will be on display here until the end of March 2022. The exhibition takes viewers back in time, as it were, and lets them decide how well works by previous winners have withstood the test of time.

You’ll be able to see works by Andrey Kuzkin (2021, 2016), Evgeny Antufiev (2020), ZIP group (2019), Andrey Filippov (2015), Pavel Pepperstein (2014), Alexander Brodsky (2010), Anatoly Osmolovsky (2007) and other contemporary Russian artists.

The city, which also has a branch of the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts and is rapidly developing as one the most important Russian art centers, with anniversary celebrations and the extensive architectural reconstruction of the city contributing to the process. A new concert hall and art cluster at the former Mayak factory on Nizhnevolzhkaya embankment are planned to open this summer.

Book tickets to Arsenal in Nizhny Novgorod here.

Perm: the new center for Russian artists in music and dance

Perm has become one of the leading centers in Russia for innovative opera and dance. Plan a visit to see the premiere of Gounod’s “Faust” (conducted by Artem Abashev) in Vassily Barkhatov’s direction or Konstantin Bogomolov’s eagerly awaited “Carmen” (Philipp Chizhevsky conducting). A premiere of “Yevgeny Onegin” in Vladimir Nastavshev’s direction is also scheduled for 2022. Also don’t miss “Les Noces. The Second Detail” – a ballet to Igor Stravinsky’s music that is the Russian staging of famous ballet by Czech dancer and choreographer Jiří Kylián. This is the second time it will be performed in Perm; the first time

was in 2012. This revival is going to be a real event for dance lovers. Book tickets to opera and ballet premieres to Perm opera here.

In summer don't miss the Dyagilev Festival organized by Teodor Currentzis and MusicAEterna. The program is not ready yet, but it will be a two-week program of contemporary Russian music, probably featuring works by Vladimir Rannev and Sergey Nevsky, and new interpretations of classical works. The music, along with a lecture series and films will make Perm a memorable place to visit. Discover the Dyagilev Festival when the summer 2022 program is finalized here.

Yekaterinburg: another world center for ballet and opera

Ekaterinburg is also a great place to see some unique gems of opera and ballet. We highly recommend going there to see the opera "L'amour de loin" (Love from Afar) by the greatest living composer (according to The New York Times) Kaija Saariaho. This is the only chance to see this wonderful opera about the love of a troubadour for a lady far away. Another production that shouldn't be missed is "Yevgeny Onegin" directed by Dmitry Volkostrelov with Konstantin Chudovksy conducting.

In the world of dance, we recommend the ballet "The Little Hump-backed Horse," based on Pyotr Ershov's poetic tale that premiered here in July 2021. It will be performed in January and February. The music was written by Anatoly Korolev, staged by the artistic director of Ural Opera Vyacheslav Samodurov, who co-authored the libretto with Bogdan Korolyok, and with choreography by Samodurov and Anton Pimonov. The EK-Playaz rappers Naum Blick and T-Bass will be telling the tale from the stage and be part of this modern show.

Another unique dance event is "L.A.D." – a new ballet that premiered in October 2021 to the music of Russian composer Leonid Desyatnikov in choreography by Maxim Petrov, Vyacheslav Samodurov, Maxim Sevagin and Andrey Kaydanovsky; with music direction by Alexei Goribol.

Book tickets to the operas and ballets here.

Visit Tula to see Albrecht Dürer's etchings and Carl Fabergé's jewels

Thanks to the efforts of several museums and the city government, Tula now has its own Museum District including branches of the Leo Tolstoy Yasnaya Polyana estate museum, the Kulikovo Field historical museum, the artist Vassily Polenov's museum and the State Historical Museum. The State Historical Museum is preparing an exhibition of Albrecht Dürer's prints from its own collection from March 1 to April 11, 2022 including his master works "Melancholia" and "Saint Jerome," as well as coins, objects and other artefacts from 15th-16th century Germany. Then from April to October 2022 you can see the Fabergé and Court Jewel Masters exhibition of the so-called late Russian Renaissance of jewelry making. It will include Russian masters such as Ovchinnikov, Chichelev, Khlebnikov, and Sazikov.

Tula is also preparing to open the Center of Family History that will research family archives (in collaboration of Polenov Museum with Tsentsiper company), while its new contemporary art cluster Octavia is actively working on new projects. This is definitely worth a whole weekend visit!

For the tickets to the branch of State Historical Museum in Tula, see the site here.

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