

Russian Acting School to Train Future Actors at Destroyed Mariupol Theater

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The destroyed Mariupol Drama Theater. **Vladimir Gerdo / TASS**

A Russian state acting school has [opened](#) enrollment for a theater arts program that will train future actors and directors for the Mariupol drama theater in occupied southern Ukraine.

“The program will be carried out through in-person courses on a state-funded basis for the Mariupol Russian Drama Theater, focusing on ‘Acting’ and ‘Theater Directing’ degrees,” St. Petersburg’s State Institute of Performing Arts (RGISI) said on its website.

Between 300 and 600 people sheltering inside the Mariupol theater are estimated to have been [killed](#) by a Russian airstrike last March, which Amnesty International has [said](#) was likely a deliberate attack on civilians. The theater has become a symbol of Russia’s aggression against Ukraine throughout its 16-month invasion.

According to RGISI, enrollment in its new theater arts program is open to residents of Ukraine’s Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions, which Moscow claimed as Russian territory following rushed referendums in September 2022 that were widely

condemned as a sham by the international community.

Related article: [Russians Buy Up Property in Occupied Mariupol As Counteroffensive Looms](#)

Courses for the new RGISI theater arts program will reportedly be [taught](#) by Russian actors Alexander Kladko, Alexander Cherkashin and Daria Jurgens, who appeared in the iconic 2000 film "*Brat 2* [Brother 2]."

The Russian anti-war project Helpdesk Media [said](#) at least 23 people have applied for the program as of Monday, adding that students will be required to work in Mariupol for three years after completing the program.

Russian forces captured Mariupol after the city's last remaining Ukrainian soldiers surrendered in May 2022, ending Russia's brutal monthslong siege.

The city, which had a pre-war population of approximately 400,000, was nearly completely destroyed by the fighting, and Russian authorities have since boasted of their efforts to rebuild it.

Last summer, St. Petersburg Governor Alexander Beglov [signed](#) an agreement establishing a sister city relationship with Mariupol.

The Russian State Institute of Performing Arts is the country's oldest theater school established in 1779.

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