

# Gorky Moscow Art Theater Director Charged With Bribery – Fontanka

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Vladimir Kekhman. **Petr Kovalev / TASS**

Russian law enforcement authorities have charged the artistic director of two of the country's most prominent theaters with accepting a bribe, the St. Petersburg-based outlet [Fontanka reported](#) Thursday.

The charges against Vladimir Kekhman stem from an investigation into suspected financial misconduct tied to the ongoing restoration of the Gorky Moscow Art Theater, where Kekhman serves as artistic director. The theater is scheduled to reopen in October 2025.

Kekhman also heads the Mikhailovsky Theater in St. Petersburg.

According to Fontanka, authorities also brought bribery charges against Marat Karginov, CEO of the contracting firm RSK-Renaissance, which is overseeing the Gorky Theater restoration.

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Investigators allege that Karginov purchased a Mercedes worth 27 million rubles (\$337,000) and registered it under one of his companies, a vehicle that Kekhman is suspected of using in exchange for facilitating construction contracts through the Culture Ministry, which owns the Moscow theater.

Neither Kekhman nor Karginov is currently being held in police custody, according to Fontanka's sources, but they have been barred from leaving Russia.

Kehman, 56, was appointed to lead the Gorky Theater in 2021 and has long been considered one of the most controversial figures in Russian theater.

He previously served as general and artistic director of the Novosibirsk Opera and Ballet Theater before being [fired](#) for staging a production of Wagner's *Tannhäuser* that sparked an outcry from the Russian Orthodox Church.

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