

Joint project of the Moscow State University Department of Journalism and University of Washington Tacoma

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Ekaterina Palashina and Chelsea Vitone

This project marks the 12th year of the journalism exchange program between Moscow State University (MSU) and the University of Washington Tacoma (UWT). We are so fortunate to have the opportunity to work, within our different cultures, on such a personal level.

Tensions are currently running high between the United States and Russia, and the media from both countries fill TV screens, radios and the internet with less than flattering stories about one another. These images can easily color public opinion, perpetuating negative stereotypes and homogenizing very diverse populations into one, giant, national identity.

Walking through Moscow, shoulder to shoulder, and working collaboratively, side by side, with students from across the world, shatters the perceptions built solely on framed media exposure. We have spent days writing and reading articles about American and Russian people, politics, history, culture and art. We have spent nights walking the city sharing stories, laughing together, and learning about each other—the ways we are different, and the many ways we are the same.

For this reason, we believe this publication is not only symbolic of the unity between MSU and UWT, but of the unity that is possible between Russia and the U.S.

Journalist

The 12th annual joint project of the Moscow State University and University of Washington Tacoma Departments of Journalism

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In addition to print production, MSU students have created in-depth multimedia projects available online:

Changing Times, Changing Families – <http://project5832.tilda.ws/page48708.html>

The Way to the Top – <http://project5832.tilda.ws/page48504.html>

Being a Foreign Journalist in Russia

Karina Hafizova

Fred Weir, a Canadian journalist, came to the U.S.S.R. in 1985 and witnessed the major events in Russian contemporary history. During his career, he contributed to *The Canadian Press*, *Hindustan Times*, *South China Morning Post* and *The Independent*. For nearly 17 years, he has written for the U.S. newspaper *The Christian Science Monitor*, which was funded by the church, but does not publish religious material. He told *The Journalist* about his professional experience and special respect for the Russian culture.

–Do you think the lack of first-hand international reporting is a problem in journalism today?

–Yes, it's a paradox and a great problem. In fact, in recent years the news sphere has expanded so much. The Internet, with its ability to gather and publish information, is much bigger than it was 10 years ago.

If you go to Google and search Russian keywords such as Putin or Kremlin, in English you will get thousands of pages of stories. But, if you go through these stories, there will be only 15 different ones, the others are copies. And, mine will be one of the originals. It's an unusual thing, but it's so.

–Do you think there is a need for professional journalists?

–Today, many people think they don't need professional journalists. There are a lot of bloggers and everybody can take photos and videos and publish them in Twitter. You can go and look for state newspapers such as *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* and RT, for example, as these well-funded enterprises are sponsored by the State.

But, they represent a particular kind of controlled journalism. I'm not saying they are bad. But if you don't look for the state perspective, you have few options and they are becoming even less.

–You cover a lot of topics through the lens of politics. Why do you do that?

–I have always been interested in politics. That's just me; I'm a political animal. Another reason is that the American audience has an interest in what is happening in Russian politics. This is the first thing they want to know about Russia because the relationship between two countries is getting worse and worse. Maybe at some

other time they would be interested in culture and theatre, but in this situation they need to be explained what is happening.

–Why do you think the Russian government maintains a tolerant attitude toward international correspondents?

–Since the Soviet Union, the authorities perceive us as diplomats, representatives of foreign countries. In the U.S.S.R., we were under control and were considered to be spies. Today, perhaps, they also look through my articles and consider me an agent, but I've never interfered with the authorities. That's why it's okay and I don't worry at all.

–Do you think there is a developed civil society in Russia? What role do the authorities have in this process?

–Environmentalists, trade organizations and so on, always come into conflict with the authorities, but through their actions civil society develops. They raise people's consciousness and the situation changes. My main complaint about Russian authorities, is that they can't let it run like this. I understand that they don't want another revolution in Russia, but in doing this, they are preventing social evolution.

These things can be irritating to authorities, but Russian authorities have too many tools to control that, and they do. I love Russia. It's a good country and the people are wonderful, but the political system is

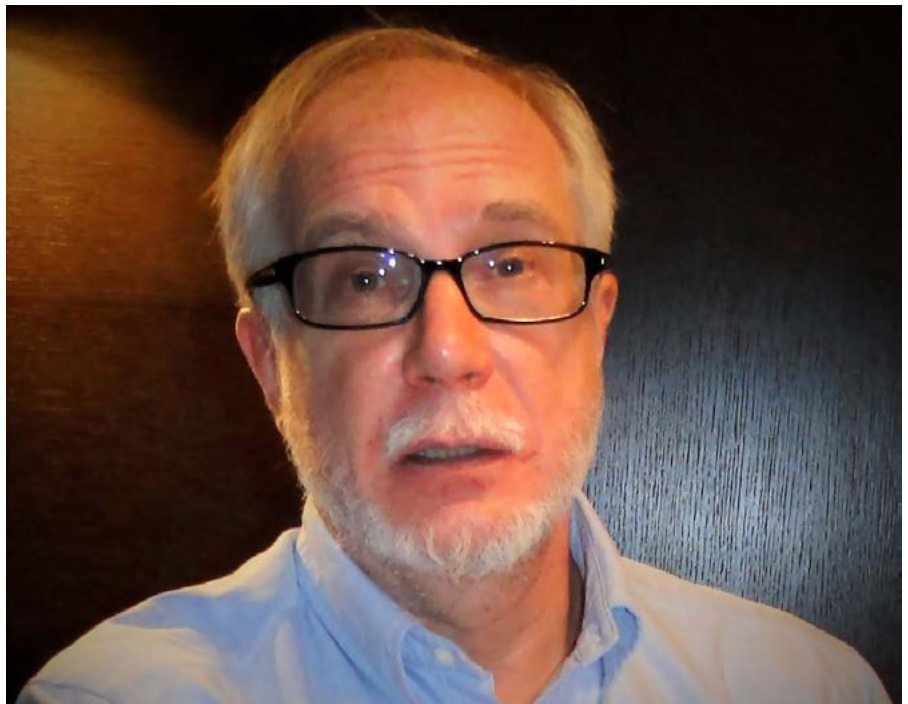
terrible. They stop social revolutions using these tools and it's bad for Russia.

–When the situation with Charlie Hebdo happened, you published an article "Je Suis Charlie? Many Russians Say 'Nyet.'" What explains this reaction of the people in our country?

–In my personal opinion, Charlie Hebdo is something like Hyde Park corner in London –a symbol of absolute freedom. They would never have jailed Pussy Riot, but in Russia, the situation is different. What has happened to Charlie Hebdo is horrifying/ Lots of people were murdered. But here, it was perceived more as an insult of Muslim feelings than a freedom of speech issue. I personally sympathize with Russians. I believe in freedom of speech, but don't think people should be free to insult other people's cultures. Russians say 'we are not Charlie', and I'm not Charlie either.

–How do you feel about living in Russia? Do you still consider yourself as a foreigner or have you managed to become a part of Russian society?

–Russia has changed a lot in these years and it is still developing. But I will always be a foreigner. When I first came here, the hotels had doormen who let the tourists go and stopped Russians. There is no chance for me to look like a Russian, and now I don't want to do it. It's easier to be a foreigner.



Fred Weir

Hillaryclinton.com



Iron Women: The Rise of Female Political Power

Chelsea Vitone

The United States is gearing up for what is set to be the most contentious election since 2008, but one of the main issues is not foreign policy or economics, it's gender. In the race toward the 2016 election, former United States Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, who narrowly lost the 2008 Democratic nomination, is facing off against 22 other candidates, only one of which is a fellow female.

In her 2008 concession speech, Clinton told supporters, "Although we weren't able to shatter that highest, hardest glass ceiling this time, thanks to you, it's got about 18 million cracks in it."

The glass ceiling is a familiar concept to women and people of color, often referring to an invisible barrier to advancement that privileges men, more specifically white men, in almost every profession. Politics has long been considered a boy's club, with the overwhelming majority of positions held by men. A 2015 report by the Center for American Women in Politics shows only seven women holding cabinet and cabinet-level positions, 104 seats in congress, and 20 seats in the senate. That comes out to roughly 20 percent of positions in each category that are held by women.

Concern with the overwhelming lack of representation of women in politics has grown beyond the United States. With United Nations secretary general Ban Ki-moon's second five-year term drawing to a close on Dec. 31, 2016, many within the international organization have begun calling for reform in the 70-year tradition of male leadership. All eight Secretary Generals, thus far, have been men. Much like the U.S. Senate, only 20 percent of countries are repre-

sented by a female ambassador.

During the 1946 formation of the U.N., the organization created a resolution establishing that "a man of eminence and high attainment" would be qualified to serve as secretary general, but times have changed.

"Gender equality is one of the world's most serious challenges, an unfulfilled goal that remains critical to advance towards an inclusive and sustainable future," Colombian ambassador, María Emma Mejía wrote in a letter to the U.N. Mejía is currently leading an initiative to nominate women for the job.

Unfortunately, there is not yet a process for allowing member states to vote for secretary general in a democratic election.

"Until now, the five permanent members of the Security Council — Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States — have bargained behind closed doors to pick from a short list of candidates that is not

formally publicized," according to The New York Times Editorial Board. Columbia, along with 44 other countries in support of the effort, is working to change that.

Despite the low numbers of women in high ranking political positions, there are still signs that the world is making steps toward gender equality. Following a 2011 decision by late Saudi King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, Saudi Arabia will open its 2015 municipal elections to women for the first time in the country's history. Ninety five years after American women won the right to vote with the 19th Amendment, Saudi women will not only be able to vote in elections, they will also be able to run for government positions.

According to local publication, Arab News, 70 women are planning to register as candidates, with an additional 80 registering as campaign managers for the December 12 election.

While the open election is a sign of



Wikimedia.com

progress, many critics worry about the structural marginalization of Saudi women by restrictions like the “guardianship system” in which male relatives have complete control over female family members’ rights, and other conservative practices common in Sunni Islam. Saudi Arabia is considered one of several Islamic countries attempting more measures to improve women’s lives, ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 2000, but gender based discrimination and violence is still prevalent. It is only logical for women’s rights advocates to worry how women in power will be received.

The U.S is no stranger to gender discrimination, and the 2016 election is no different. Female candidates and debate moderators are juxtaposed with openly misogynistic candidates like Donald Trump, creating a space for articles like Huffington Post’s “Is It Going To Be Open Season On All Women In Politics In 2016?”

Like any presidential candidate, Clinton has come under fire for any and all issues that may possibly conflict with her appointment to the Office of the President—most recently the email server scandal in which Clinton routed government emails through a private home server— but even opposing candidates, like Bernie Sanders, have noticed that some of the criticism surrounding Clinton can be considered sexist. The media go beyond criticizing her politics, to insulting her clothing choices, hair style, age, marriage and makeup.

Even reputable news outlets like the Washington Times repeatedly refer to her as “Mrs. Clinton” rather than the standard last name assignment awarded to male candidates, which works to undermine her authority as a political figure, reminding the reader 17 times in a 1400 word article that she is someone’s wife.

In spite of gendered criticism, women continue to press against the glass ceiling of politics, willing it to break. German Chancellor Angela Merkel has led her country for the last decade, Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff has held office for five years, and Geun-bye Park has led South Korea for the last two years. These women, along with many of their peers, made the 2015 Forbes magazine’s list of The World’s Most Powerful Women. As the Iron Lady, Margaret Thatcher once said, “In politics, if you want anything said, ask a man. If you want anything done, ask a woman.”



cityoftacoma.com

Would A Man Be Asked That Question?

Tacoma Mayor Marilyn Strickland sat down with The Journalist to discuss her experience as a woman in politics and what she sees for the future of female politicians.

What/who inspired you to get into politics?

There are two people, or heroes, really. First, my mom. She has always been the type of person to push me to excel. She taught me that if you’re afraid to do something, you have to do it. She grew up in an era where there were not a lot of opportunities for women. The second was my guidance counselor in middle school, Brian Ebersole. He went on to be mayor (of Tacoma) and speaker of the Washington State House of Representatives.

What were some main difficulties for you, as a woman, getting into/succeeding in politics? Any experiences that stick in your head?

Washington State has been very progressive in electing women into office. I’m the second female mayor, the first woman of color. I think, in politics, there are the same biases about women in general. ‘Oh we think you’re qualified and smart and doing it for the right reason, but are you tough enough?’ Would a man be asked that question? Probably not. There are two sides to that. There is the stereotypical female—warm, nurturing, where you are perceived as weak. But, if you are strong and assertive, they call you the b-word. You can’t win. Politics is a contact sport. You have to expect that going in.

Are there any parts of politics that you think are more difficult for women than for men? Why?

I always wonder, do fewer women make the decision to run? If so, why? There

tends to be a checklist for people before they decide to run for office. For men, I think it centers on how much money, but women have a checklist about how it affects everyone else first instead of what you want to do. Running for office can be a really ugly, daunting event. You have to think, can you afford to run for office? It may be easier for those with a well-to-do financial status. Does it change depending on your marital status? Also, a lot of women have children. They’re asked, “how will you balance work and home life?” How often is a man asked those questions?

What do you think of the current representation for women in the United States? Abroad?

We need more women in leadership positions, in elected office and in business. Nearly 17 percent of mayors in America are female and 2 percent are women of color. They are the same trends you see in business. Women are grossly underrepresented.

What would you like to see for women in politics in the future?

If half of Congress was made up of women, this partisan drama would not exist. I think that we need to get more women out there to consider running for office. We need to create a climate where more women feel comfortable running for office, state legislature, government, or congress. I truly feel it would be for the betterment of our country.

What do you think of Hillary Clinton’s 2016 run? What do you think of how she’s been received in American society?

Hillary has been on the scene for a long time. She was the first First Lady that was a business woman. She is the most qualified person in the entire field. I don’t hear people often talk about Bernie Sanders and Joe Biden’s age, but that was the first thing they said when Hillary announced she would run. It’s pretty irrelevant to her ability to lead.

How do you think having a woman in power would affect America on foreign and domestic issues?

It’s about time for the U.S to have a woman to lead. I don’t think there’s an upside or downside to it. There’s Margaret Thatcher, Merkel in Germany, I don’t think there’s a problem having a woman in leadership, as long as they’re qualified. Globally, people seem to have a more open mind about women leading. I would love to see women evolving into strong leadership groups.

Don't Shoot

Justin Lawrence

A gathering of Tacoma citizens pled publicly with the police as they marched down Pacific Avenue, blocking traffic on Sunday, August 30. It's an obvious and perhaps unnecessary message for the officers present at the peaceful rally. However, the words "Don't Shoot," plastered boldly on a large banner, were not necessarily intended for the officers present; they have become a stinging criticism directed at law enforcement across the United States.

Tacoma citizens have joined the growing national Black Lives Matter movement to protest racially motivated police brutality specifically targeted at black citizens.

"The People's Assembly, started in July 2015, was a series of weekly rallies/community gatherings ...that aimed to interrupt business-as-usual culture, bring awareness to anti-Black state violence, and creat[e] a space for community members to connect and share stories and resources," said Cathy Nguyen, co-founder and organizer of Tacoma Stands Up.

Tacoma Stands Up joins the national movement, which was sparked by the 2014 police shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. Tacoma locals Nguyen and Matthew Wilson founded Tacoma Stands Up in August, 2014 to "[call] for an end to police brutality and social injustice through peaceful organization."

The organization has spearheaded local activities, raising high the flag of social justice, reminding the country that Black Lives Matter in Tacoma. It has organized



Tacoma Citizens participate in The People's Assembly, a public protest organized by local organization Tacoma Stands Up

and supported activities from protests to poetry readings and live music, all directed at uniting the community and raising awareness of racial injustice.

"Tacoma Stands Up has connected with a number of individuals and community groups in different ways throughout our evolving work," said Nguyen.

She also shared that local businesses and organizations, including social justice group The Conversation and Samdhana Karana Yoga, have shown support and even offered space to hold discussions and strategy meetings.

However, there are also challenges for the kind of public protest Tacoma Stands Up pursues. Nationally, critics have accused the movement of being anti-white and anti-police. Locally, group members were verbally assault during a protest near Dorky's Arcade in downtown Tacoma.

On August 9, 2015, it was a scene of tension when the weekly protest group found itself victim to hostilities from Dorky's owner, Les Voros-Bond. Voros-Bond was

captured on video antagonizing people at the gathering and was accused of directing racial slurs at the protestors.

Voros-Bond has expressed his regret publicly through the Tacoma News Tribune. "I just snapped," Voros-Bond said in the interview, as an apology for his actions that day. While some have forgiven the business owner for his actions, others in the community have chosen to protest and boycott the business.

Voros-Bond's outburst sheds indisputable light on the racial tension that lies beneath the surface of the country. This kind of underlying racially hostile attitude is exactly what Tacoma Stands Up, and more widely the Black Lives Matter movement, is digging up and bringing to the surface for everyone to see.

The People's Assembly protests have ended for now, and Tacoma Stands Up is currently engaged in a strategic planning phase. Nguyen said that while they do not have specific projects planned as of yet, they are prioritizing "addressing criminal justice system inequity and building critical consciousness."

One thing is for sure, the U.S. has not seen the end of the Black Lives Matter movement. Tacoma Stands Up will continue fighting for their message to be heard.

"The message that we hope to spread is that each person has a stake in the greater movement of justice – as each of us are a thread in this greater quilt of community, our combined efforts are necessary for sustainable, holistic change."

For more information see Tacoma Stands Up (Facebook), @TacomaStandsUp (Twitter), #BlackLivesMatter (Twitter)

Facebook: Tacoma Stands Up



Supporter poses for an online photo campaign launched by Tacoma Stands Up, "Tacoma Stands Up because..."

Changing Times, Changing Families

Muratova Viktoriya, Saponova Valeriya

Understanding what a family is has dramatically changed in modern society. Traditional families with many children are becoming a rarity, while couples without children are becoming the norm. Today, all families could be divided into two main groups: child-free and child-friendly.

The village of two houses

Nadezhda and Andrew Chumbadze, both in their 50s, have 18 children, all of them adopted. The Chumbadzes adopted their first children nearly 20 years ago. In church, they were told about two children, Katya and Roma, who were in need of family, so, these kids became members of their family.

Since then, the Chumbadzes have sheltered 16 more children. Today, some of their elder children have grown up and moved away. Three of their elder children have stayed at the farm and they are now helping raise the eight underage children.

The Chumbadzes used to live in Moscow, when they had only Katya and Roma. In 1995, they left Moscow and settled in the Tver' region. They live together in their own private village of two houses. Nadezhda confessed that after adopting their seventh child, they were thinking of stopping. They had never even imagined so many children in one family, but each child's life situation motivated them. If they saw that they could be mom and dad for one more child, they would do it.

"If we would be alive and it would be God willing, we would adopt more children," Nadezhda said.

Though they grew up together on the farm, all of the children have different destinies. One boy, who had graduated from secondary school, came back to live with his parents until he was able to find himself, and his passion, at age 23. Some have gone to college and secondary school, while some have anchored and started families. No matter where they are, they communicate with one another and stay connected to the family.

Almost every child has had some form of mental or physical disability. The Chumbadzes know that there are very few parents who can handle such responsibility, so, the couple continued to take in struggling orphans and support them wholeheartedly.

The family often faces misunderstandings with neighbors and local authorities. They receive criticism from judgment because it is common to adopt children just for the money. More and more often, they are thinking of moving to another place. The Chumbadzes have published a petition against governmental arbitrariness in family matters. They declare that foster families are mistreated and underrepresented.

Nadezhda recognizes that her responsibility for children helps her to resist negative influences, while Andrew relies on God.

Living for yourself

Olga Afanasyeva, 29, has never been interested in parenting. She said this idea wasn't among those prescriptions her parents wrote her. Rather than emphasizing becoming a mother, she was taught the importance of a good education, a well-paid job and finding the right life position. Her parents left everything else to her discretion.

"I used to think of having child in future. But the longer I live,



Valeriya Saponova

the more often I understand that it's not my cup of tea. I'm too responsible for giving birth to children 'just in case,'" Afanasyeva said.

However, there is a thought that Afanasyeva said that "sticks in my throat."

"Children are our future, and their children are their future. Consequently, all generations have no present, only future. And life is here and now."

Afanasyeva doesn't think that every woman has to be a mother. For her, happiness is not in parenting, but in helping those who cannot quite help themselves—animals. Her husband supports her in this position.

"I want to bring up a human and not to choke him by my ideology," Afanasyeva said. "I want to give him freedom. But I understand that it would be too hard for me and I don't want to hurt another human. I recognize that I am so imperious, and I want to spare my future child."

The child-free community is commonly divided into two main groups: "rejecters" and "aficionado."

"Rejecters" flatly dislike children; the very process of pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding is biologically disgusting for them, according to a Post Nauka interview with sociologist Olga Isupuva, a sociologist and Senior Researcher at High School of Economics in Moscow.

"Aficionado" sometimes like children, but strongly believe that their way of life can't be connected with raising children, said Isupuva. These people enjoy communicating and spending time with children but refuse to have their own.

Ann Varga, Family Psychologist at High School of Economics in Moscow, identifies some explanation in this uncommon trend in societal factors.

"The popularity of the child-free community is connected with some cultural trends: the disappearing of traditional childhood, family crisis, dramatic changes in social mindsets and, of course, the diversity of lifestyles and family positions," Varga said.

It may not be common to see households with nearly 20 children, and it follows reason that people cannot completely stop having kids and live selfishly. But, Russia is witnessing the socially acceptable norm of the one-to-two child household being stretched in either direction. The times always change, no matter how hard people fight it: this is an inevitable truth of life. One does not need to force themselves to agree with the changing times, but some tolerance can certainly make life much easier for everyone.

Building Bridges

Alina Ryazanova

Baden-Baden is a favorite destination of Russian millionaires and Arab sheikhs. But this city of python skin boots, cabriolets and Faberge jewelry has another side to it. Across the railway track and over the freeway lies Westliche-Industriestrasse street. In this industrial area, two dormitories can be found housing 140 of the 450 Baden-Baden refugees. Later this year, more dormitories will be opened and by the end of 2017, 2,000 more refugees are expected to come. For a town with a population of 50,000, that is quite a challenge.

Samuel Mottaki, an instructor in the local Academy of Martial Arts, is one of the five founders of the 'AktivBrücke' society. Refugees greet him heartily and shake hands with him. Mottaki came to Germany as a refugee from Iran twenty-five years ago. He learned the language in nine months and found a job quickly. But, Germany was not always as tolerant of refugees as it is today.

"A lot of Turkish migrants were coming in those years, and the dislike towards them affected us all," Mottaki said. "I remember trying to talk to people at parties. More than 10 people in a row would simply walk away on finding out I was from Iran."

Today, the situation is different. According to the German Ministry of Internal affairs, more than 413,000 refugees have come to the country during 2015, 112,000 of them from Syria. White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest announced in September that the United States is going to

take in 10,000 Syrian refugees during the next year.

Civic engagement and awareness of this problem shown by Germans can be a good example for other countries. Having worked for almost a year now, and growing ever bigger, the start up web project 'Flüchtlinge Willkommen,' or 'Refugees welcome,' assists refugees in multiple ways. The website offers opportunities for low-cost, or even free housing for refugees and gathers donations to assist migrants in need. Tagesschau, an ARD network website, hosts a refugee integration map that features approximately 200 volunteer locations all around Germany focused on refugee assistance.

Volunteers take action

Volunteers working with refugees in dormitories are not scarce in Germany. They try to help refugees come to grips with the language and the local culture. AktivBrücke, or 'Active Bridge,' is a project organized two months ago by a group of such volunteers. It aims both to help refugees integrate and to help the society accept them. According to the group, they would like to "build a bridge between the two cultures."

Mottaki wants to make sure the group is effective in thoroughly assisting the refugees.

"A refugee asked me once if I was a racist, which quite confused me," Mottaki said. "It turned out he expected me to give him a free ticket. Many people think refugees are to be patronized. They buy them bus tickets, they cook and do dishes for them, saying,



Alina Ryazanova

'Come on, we feel sorry for them.' Yet, it all ends up like this. I think we should teach them how to do things instead of doing everything for them."

What makes AktivBrücke unique is the fact that it helps refugees be more self-sufficient, allowing them to take part in the decisions of the group. For example, its five-member board includes Salih Ndoco, a refugee from Gambia, and its overall staff boasts more than 20 refugees. For them, membership costs a symbolic annual fee of one euro. For other members, the fee is 20 euros a year.

"I believe the refugees must have a say too," Mottaki said. "In other groups, the volunteers are the ones who make decisions. But, people can decide for themselves what they need and what they lack in."

Twice a week, volunteers help refugees write resumes. After three and a half months with the official status of a refugee, they can find a job. Minimal pay rates have been introduced in order to avoid discrimination. For instance, refugees must be paid at least eight euros for housekeeping. Mottaki estimates that about three-fourths of the employers he has talked to do not mind hiring refugees.

After helping find a job, volunteers continue to look after the refugees, and the employer calls them instead of the Job Center in case of trouble. Some refugees are training at local libraries, bakeries, theatres, and carpentry workshops. Others work at Nordsee or McDonalds.

To help the refugees with integration, AktivBrücke has set up a number of projects. Every Thursday, local women meet with female refugees to have coffee, make



Alina Ryazanova

jewelry, do manicures, play board games or simply get to know each other.

A new project called 'HelpYou' is projected to start in October. This organization will offer 20 refugees from various countries training in the Red Cross to learn to provide first aid to others. A theatre set up by AktivBrücke is also due to open in October. Its troupe will include both locals and refugees. Other plans include offering drum lessons and finding a gym. In their free time, young people play soccer, table tennis or ride bikes. The atmosphere is like a summer camp for adults.

Mottaki believes refugees need to be more aware of their rights. He helps them open bank accounts and apply for dormitory renovations.

"For now they are too shy. They keep quiet about any problems," he said. "They must remember they have certain rights, otherwise their problems will pile up and the situation will get out of control with discontent turning into protest. We are trying to prevent it."

The AktivBrücke system is reminiscent of cellular mitosis. Right now, they are stocking up resources, setting up activity classes, and involving local people in their work. But, when new refugees come, the system will divide, and new dormitories will be looked after by trained refugees

We'll be a bit simpler

Schufsbachstraße Street is full of luxurious cottages and green lawns. In November 2014, a temporary dorm was set up in front of one of them. The people who lived in that neighborhood protested, yet the dorm was constructed anyway and will house 60 refugees who will arrive this autumn.

Krista and Ludwig Kelner live only a dozen meters away from the white panel building. A cheerful dog meets their guests in the front yard.

"We are not going to get a guard dog, but we'll have to install a burglar alarm, just in case," Ludwig says with a smile.

They did not take part in the protesting and even shamed their neighbours for it, yet they are not too enthusiastic about the situation.

"We are not concerned about the property values going down because of our new neighbours. Not knowing who will come is what scares us, whether they will be young men from Syria and Africa looking for a pretty girl and an easy life or families with children. We are ready to cooperate, to help and to keep in touch

with them, but only if they are ready to do it as well."

In August and early September, AktivBrücke held a series of meetings with Schufsbachstraße residents. Seventeen people met in Baden-Baden's cafes to learn more about local projects, refugees, and to voice their concerns and try to help.

"I don't like calling them refugees. They are our new neighbours," said Andreas Baltser, a Schufsbachstraße resident. "This will change Germany as well. We won't be that severe, ever-frowning and strictly organized. We will become a bit simpler. All that is happening around us is a fascinating story."

Mottaki believes it is not enough to reform refugees—he thinks common people should be reformed as well.

"I once read a letter to the Badisches



Alina Ryazanova

Tagblatt newspaper with a question 'why do they teach martial arts to refugees, what if they beat someone up?' Someone told me on seeing it, 'we have to convince them that refugees are different.' But, how can we explain to people that sports is even more about being friendly, respectful to others and united, rather than merely being a form of aggression. So, I just came up to the guys and asked each how much they needed to cook their national dish. I then handed out a couple of euros each, and we invited all those willing to come to a dinner. We called it 'Breaking bread in Baden-Baden.' And then we told everybody who came that it was our kickboxing group who had prepared it all. Anyway, as soon as something bad happens, the refugee's image in people's minds will be spoiled."

The redemption concept

Why bother to help? Many people are astonished to hear that question.

For radio journalist Charlotte Grieser, the question almost makes her burst into tears.

"People put their lives at stake to come here," Grieser said. "Why can't I at least talk to them once a week? I want to show these people they are welcome here. I live a happy life. I can hardly imagine dictatorship and famine raging somewhere. And, I cannot stay indifferent when there are people dying on their way only to be refused asylum here."

AktivBrücke volunteer Costina Musat explained: "People fear the unknown; they fear radical Islam. We cannot just ignore that possibility, but we cannot afford to re-

fuse others a chance to find a better life. We are all humans, and skin colour or religion should not prevent us from seeing it."

AktivBrücke call themselves pioneers. They are the only group to use internet technology so much in their work and to let refugees take part in management. They also keep in touch with dozens of people via WhatsApp.

More than 60 people have joined the group since July, with more continuing to sign up. And, more refugees keep coming to Germany. According to Tagesblatt, as of now they account for 1 percent of the population of the country.

Will civic engagement work, making German Chancellor Angela Merkel's statement "We can do it" true? For now, this question remains unanswered.

Russia and America Battle Over Kingdom

Arina Mesnyankina, Marina Bocharova

On the border of Sudan and Egypt, there sits Bir Tawil, a small area of land that has not been claimed for more than 100 years. This situation changed in 2014, when not one, but two prospective kings, proclaimed the space as theirs.

Russian traveler and amateur radio operator Dmitry Zhikharev and American farmer Jeremiah Heaton are now locked in battle for the property and title. Both have big plans for the development of the State, but continue to argue about the new Kingdom via Skype. Evidently, neither of them is going to concede.

Who is the king?

"King of Bir Tawil, Dmitri The First," also known as Dmitry Zhikharev, is a 41-year-old traveler who has visited 99 countries. He says he is eager to visit and collect remote countries where he has worked in radio.

"That's what makes me more in favor of travelling. I am not just sitting at home and operating with those countries, but I am going to these places and giving the chance to other amateur radio operators."

Before the new ruler planted his flag in the sand, Zhikharev and his partner had to conduct a little diplomacy. They had to get special entry visas to Egypt, talk with Egypt's tribal lords, negotiate their way to the Bartazuga Mountain in Bir Tawil and travel more than 1,800 kilometers (about 1100 miles).

Zhikharev plans to build everything—from the toilet to an airport.

"For me, the challenge of building the country from scratch and actually being involved in this is the most important goal," he said.

However, the new ruler admits that he and his friend are doing it for their own amusement first.

"I'm travelling there to fulfill my need as an operator on the radio, bring radio to an area that currently doesn't have radio," Zhikharev said.

He added, "There is only one law as of now and that law is me."

The story of the self-proclaimed Russian King's competitor, Virginian farmer Jeremiah Heaton, is beautiful and touching. Heaton promised his daughter Emily that she would become a princess, and so he traveled 6,000 miles to claim his new 'state' that his family named The Kingdom of North Sudan.

Heaton traveled to Bir Tawil a few months earlier than Zhikharev. He has since formally applied to the United Nations to get entity status. According to an interview with *The Guardian*, Heaton has launched a campaign to raise billions of dollars to create The Ark, a state of the art laboratory dedicated to researching how crops could be grown with limited water supplies.

"The Kingdom of North Sudan will be the world's first crowd-fund-

ed nation," Heaton told Al Jazeera. "People can take great pride in knowing that they're part of funding the world's newest nation."

The Journalist attempted to contact Heaton to find out more about his journey and plans, but he was not available for comment.

Zhikharev has denounced Heaton's claim on the land, arguing that the territory is his.

Legal bases

"The Bir Tawil case is one that could not be set out as a matter of law," said Marina Filimonova, an expert in law at the Institute of International Law in Moscow. On one hand, according to the U.S. Supreme Court, land that is terra nullius (the legal term for land that has never been subject to the sovereignty of any state) may be acquired through occupation. However, on the other, attempting to do this could in some circumstances violate international law.

As Filimonova explains, in accordance with international law there is no such legal distinction as terra nullius—no man's land. In these situations then, the unclaimed land is equal to an unrecognized state.

For example, after the collapse of Ethiopia, an unrecognized state of Eritrea has formed, and after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Nagorno Karabakh was established. The same thing happened with Bir Tawil.

Dr. Alexander Domrin, a comparative law professor at the National Research University High School of Economics, explained the conundrum in regard to these geographical spaces. On the one hand, anyone can come and declare himself as a king, put up a flag and verbally impose laws, as the self-proclaimed kings of the Bir Tawil did. On the other hand, this action will not have any legal basis; another unrecognized country is being formed.

Domrin said that Somalia is in a similar situation. Somalia territories do not belong to anyone. Clan chiefs and local warlords rule them. Although Somalia is a de jure presidential republic, in fact, there is a total anarchy in the country and, from a legal viewpoint, no one officially regulates the territory of Somalia.

According to international law, it does not matter who was the first on this land or who has more proof. It does not matter if one declared themselves as king whether you gave a promise to your daughter to make her a princess, or if you just decided to create a state from nothing in a dead desert, it would be an unrecognized state anyway.

These legal distinctions have not stopped others from going down this same path. For example, tricky American Dennis Hope was selling tracks of land on the moon. The Bates family of Britain has been selling dignified titles from their unrecognized state on former British offshore platform, Sealand. Zhikharev doesn't sell titles or sand from the Nubian desert, he simply went to Bir Tawil, put his flag in the sand and decided to build the state by himself—from the toilet to the radio station.

There are no boundaries in Bir Tawil. The entire area is populated by the gold mining Ababda tribe. Supposedly, they are Egyptians. Egypt, which recognized its borders outlined in 1899 along the parallel, abandoned Bir Tawil, claiming instead a Hala'ib triangle—an outlet to the Red Sea and a nature preserve. At the same time, Sudan claims Hala'ib triangle and considers that the Bir Tawil belongs to the Egyptians. That is why the smaller piece of land 2,060 square kilometers—is considered a no man's land.



Businessman Discusses Unpredictable Russia

Alexander Privezentsev

A collision between two forces will always produce collateral damage. Ripples from the explosive conflict in Ukraine have not only complicated Russian-U.S. relations, but have reached deep into the economy and the lives of ordinary people. However, despite the economic difficulties, some businessmen still hold out hope for the future. Entrepreneur and business owner Jeffrey Combs is a prime example.

"Every crisis creates opportunity," said 59-year-old Combs, founder of the Moscow based telecommunications company OOO NCI.

Economic crisis has been a thread throughout Combs' life. In 1998, after a crippling financial crisis in Russia that dramatically devalued the ruble, Combs moved to Moscow to protect his business and to develop it further.

Combs shared his initial difficulties moving to Moscow: "I came here without any knowledge of the language and so it was a challenge for me to learn and to be able to read, to communicate with people."

On top of this, he ran into some issues with his legal documents.

"Certainly, it was a bureaucratic challenge associated with getting visas, getting tax identification numbers, complying with Russian regulations. But, otherwise life here professionally was, probably, the same as I expect it almost anywhere."

Life in Russia has become much more comfortable for Combs. Today, he has many friends both from the expat and Russian communities. But, life here is still a challenge for him. He doesn't really know what the next day will be like and this fact truly engages him.

"I like that there is still a level of excitement associated with Russia, because, somehow I don't say this positively, there is a lack of stability. Every day you wake up, you can never be sure what's going to happen. But for me, it makes my life a little bit more interesting than if it was predictable. So that's why, I suppose, the unpredictability of Russia makes this interesting," said Combs, smiling.

In Russia, Combs met his wife, Elena.

They have two daughters, Ekaterina and Elizaveta. Combs spoke about the benefits and challenges of being a part of bilingual family.

"I'd say, from a parent point, maybe I'm not as close to my children as I would prefer because they are more comfortable speaking Russian than English. So, they tend to be more opened up to my wife, because it's easier for them to speak and communicate in Russian."

Combs played golf a lot when he lived in the U.S. and continued his hobby in Moscow. He placed fourth in the 2001 Russian Open (Amateurs) and is five-time club champion at the Moscow Country Club. Of course, that was when he was still single.

"Now, my spare time revolves more around my family. So, on weekends, I'm trying to participate in family activities. We go to the theatre or circus, or do some kind of physical activities."

Though Combs would like to move his

family to the United States one day, he has no certain plans for that in the near future. The disastrous situation in Ukraine has created complications and, for now, his focus is on his business.

"My business is pretty much dependent on the Russian economy. Some of our services are dollar-based, and it has become less competitive with decline of the ruble."

Referring to Russia-U.S. relations, Combs believes that both governments could improve their behavior. He obviously does not want the situation to escalate, and said that relations between other countries are also being strained. However, Combs believes that every crisis can create opportunities in the near future for anyone.

"At some point, it's going to be a great opportunity to invest money in something in Russia, and being here could be an advantage to participate in that next swing upwards."



Alexander Privezentsev

Andrew Freeburg: Citizen of the World

Ekaterina Palashina

Andrew Freeburg is a trainee at the artistic Laboratory of Dmitry Krymov. He came to Russia with the goal to plunge into Stanislavsky's system in Russian theatre. Today, he lectures to students in the field of theater design and technology. Moreover, he takes part in the performances of the School of Dramatic Art and considers himself as a citizen of the world.

All the world is a stage

Freeburg developed an interest in theater at a young age. At age 10, his favorite books were the dramas of Shakespeare and Chekhov. Along with these, the historical features of his hometown played an important role in Freeburg's fate.

"There are several Stratfords in the whole world: in Britain, Canada and here in Connecticut. All of them somehow are connected with the name of William Shakespeare. Our Stratford is not upon Avon, but the Housatonic River. It's considered as the birthplace of the American Shakespeare Theatre. However, in the '80s it was closed down," said Freeburg, reflecting on his hometown.

After high school, Freeburg enrolled at Yale University for a neuroscience program, yet, he could not give up his passion for theater. He began attending extra classes in the Yale School of Drama, where he took an educational course on scenography.

"I was accepted to this course out of my academic program as an exception. I wanted something more, a thorough study and deep knowledge of the dramatic school," Freeburg recalled. "I needed strict teachers and requirements. I wanted criticism for failed attempts. You can't say if you don't know what the bucksaw is."

The friendship of two mainlands

After three years of study at Yale, Freeburg took a sabbatical and came to Russia. The idea of an exchange of experience between American and Russian students belongs to Anatoly Smelyansky, the former Rector (Dean) of the Moscow Art Theatre School (MATS). Since 1991, the internship program has been conducted with the assistance of the National Theater Institute in Connecticut.

Freeburg came to Russia in order to gain valuable experience with Stanislavski's method acting system and to practice modern Russian drama.



Ekaterina Yakel

According to Freeburg, the group of international students was fairly large.

"Today, the number of students has decreased. The reason, to my mind, is that parents are afraid to let their children come to another continent, especially when they read the controversial articles about Russia in the local newspapers," he said.

The chance acquaintanceship

"The first time I lived in Russia it was like I lived in a bubble. There were a whole group of producers and interpreters in the Moscow Art Theater who served our language needs. They always accompanied foreign students everywhere. We called them angels. The vast majority of the lecturers also spoke English. Personally, I didn't have any powerful stimulus to learn the language."

One day, Freeburg's friend invited him to an exhibition dedicated to the 10 year anniversary of the artistic Laboratory of Dmitry Krymov, a famous Russian scene-painter. Freeburg was introduced to Krymov and this chance acquaintance has had serious influence on Freeburg's life. Krymov placed a stringent condition on Freeburg—he had to learn to speak Russian fluently. Only then would Freeburg be allowed to work at the artistic Laboratory.

Freeburg then came back to the U.S. in order to complete his last year at Yale and earn his Bachelor's degree. During his studies, he enrolled in an intensive Russian course and soon he received a Fulbright Grant.

"I found out about winning the grant only on graduation day. I was beside myself with delight. First of all, I called Krymov and

shared my news. He thought it was someone else speaking to him; he did not believe that I spoke Russian so well."

The cosmopolitan dreamer

Freeburg learned the language for a year in total, but he has acquired self-confidence only in the natural language environment. The most difficult part of the language for him is still phonetics. Freeburg tries to read Russian literature in the original. He says he is fond of A.S. Pushkin, especially "Eugene Onegin." The main social surroundings for Freeburg in Moscow are Russian people, and he doesn't like being called an expat.

"When I hear the word 'expat,' I immediately imagine those people who came here only for the purpose of getting benefits," he said. "They don't enjoy the study of the culture, or the identity of the country and its natives. I don't have a job here and I live by my own money, which is quickly running out. I have no opportunity to be officially employed as long as I don't have Russian citizenship".

It's only a matter of time for Freeburg before he will leave Russia, but he has yet to decide. Either way, he has big plans for the future. He desires to become a master of scenography and travel throughout the world.

"I cannot make up my mind whether to return my homeland or not. Such a choice is a really challenging issue for many people. Anyway, I can say that my dream is always to stay free from the shackles of one place of living."

American Ballerina Dances Her Way Across Moscow

Daria Krikumenko

In 2009, a 15-year-old girl made the journey from California to Moscow. Joy Womack was to become the first American ballerina who signed a contract with the Bolshoi Theater. Today she works for the Kremlin Ballet Theater.

Joy Womack was invited to dance in the world famous Bolshoi Theater, the best school to dance with and the number one place to go to study. For Womack, it was important to take this chance because she understood that if she didn't, she may not get another opportunity.

"I was always fascinated by Russians, by their personalities," she said.

The first year in Moscow was the hardest one. Everything was so different from what she was used to. Womack remembers her first winter in Moscow. She was getting so cold that her fingers were red. She came back inside but nothing could get them warm again.

"During the first year, there were a lot of cultural things I didn't understand. I felt very lonely. I hated that feeling, but ballet made it worth it. Now, I'm happy for those hard times."

Her years in the Bolshoi were not the easiest, but she is proud of what she was able to accomplish in such a short time.

"I also understand as an artist that you can't look at yourself through your passport or your nationality."

Womack knew what she needed to do to grow as an artist. She wanted to go to the Bolshoi. It was her dream, and she got it. However, as she grew up, she began thinking about other opportunities to grow as a dancer. This reflection caused her to look for more experience, leading her, eventually, to the Kremlin Ballet Theater.

Today, her dream is to dance as Giselle, as well as Juliette in the classic "Romeo and Juliette." However, she is not in a hurry. She recognizes that taking an early opportunity may prevent a better one in the future.

"Like my teacher says, if you want to grow—you can't rush. When I was young, I wanted everything right away. It's im-



Alexander Kabanov

portant to make goals and it's important to prove yourself."

It's often said that ballerinas have an intense training schedule. However, Womack is unique in that she not only does ballet, she also goes to the gym, takes yoga classes, and does pilates.

"My day looks like this: I wake up at 7 and work out until 8 a.m. I go to work, I warm up, have rehearsals, classes, more rehearsals and then performances. If we don't have the second performance, I go to the gym after work. So, this is training, more than 12 hours a day."

Despite her incredibly busy schedule, Womack is planning for the future. For now, the star's biggest dream is just to dance, to create and to work hard. She's passionate about her art, and wants to see more ballerinas featured in mainstream media.

"We see rappers and pop stars with their fake boobs and bad language on TV. I think these are bad role models for children and I'd like to see classical artists and musicians become more famous in the public eye."

Womack wants to provide children with a positive example. She posts daily video blogs on the Internet of her training routines and other details chronicling a ballerina's life.

Despite her passion and active career,

the days can still be difficult. The past year was hard for her. She was unhappy and thought seriously about returning to the United States. However, this year is going well and she likes to envision Moscow as her home-base for the near future.

Womack shared that she loves Russia, she loves her company, and she loves her art—even on the bad days. For her, it's all a part of life.

"You feel so real here. In the States, it's a little bit safe and it's a little bit muted. But here, if you are sad, you are dying sad, and if you are happy, you are totally happy. And, today, you caught me on a definitely good day."



Alexander Kabanov

Russian and American Literature Collide

Timur Gadylshin & Elizaveta Chervyakova

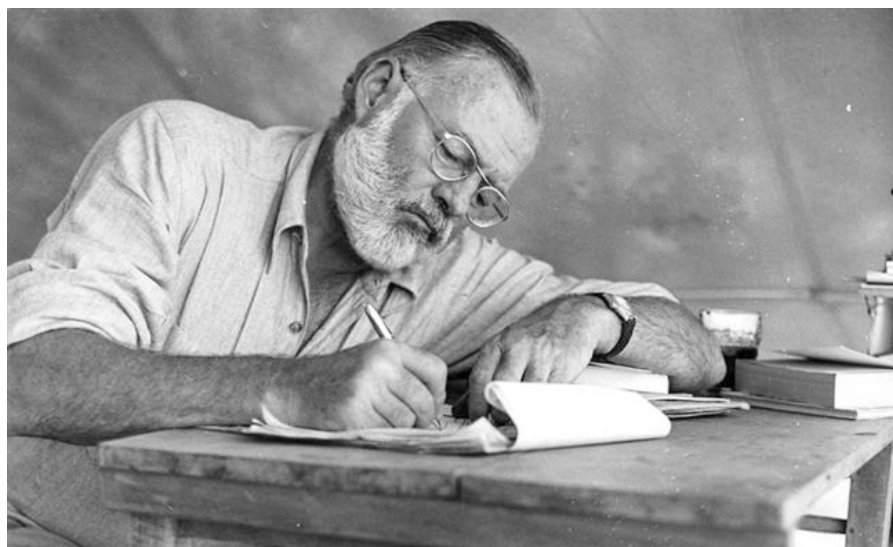
The fate of Russian literature in the United States is quite interesting. Some great writers were very popular, while others have been practically unknown. The same is true for American literature in Russia. The Journalist asked Pavel Balditsyn, a professor in the Journalism Department of Moscow State University and a prominent researcher of American literature, to speak about the interplay of the literary worlds in the two countries.

Golden start

"There was a great interest in Russia in the American struggle for independence from Britain. Russian Decembrists admired Benjamin Franklin, especially his personal 'project of arriving at moral perfection' useful for every man. Pushkin and Gogol read tales of Washington Irving translated into Russian. Russia's support to the New Republic, including trade and diplomacy, entailed raising American attention to Russian literature. Through such interactions, our nations were exposed to cultural exchange. "Captain's Daughter" by Pushkin became the first popular Russian novel in the U.S. in 1846. It was republished time after time in the 1870s and 1880s. Then, the new idols appeared: Turgenev and Tolstoy.

The era of Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky and Chekhov

"Eventually, writers such as William Dean Howells and Henry James started to promote Russian fiction in the States. Leo Tolstoy had great success with his novels "Anna Karenina" and "War and Peace," and Howells encouraged people to read them. For most Americans, it was a challenge to get through the enormous "War and Peace." "Even among writers, there were people who were convinced that the novel was too



philosophic and especially long. American writer Stephen Crane desperately tried to finish "War and Peace" and wrote about it in a letter: 'It goes on and on like Texas.'

"Then, American readers were shocked by "Crime and Punishment" and "Brothers Karamazov" by Fyodor Dostoyevsky. After reading these novels, Howells asked American novelists to pay attention to the "smiling sides of life," considering tragedy to be unusual in the U.S.

"Anton Chekhov was acclaimed to be one of the greatest playwrights in America, the second after Shakespeare. However, he was also widely recognized for his short stories. Thanks to Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky and Chekhov, American interest in Russia and Russian literature dramatically increased.

Ideology vs Literature

"After the October revolution in 1917, the main goal for America's ruling class was to destroy the Bolshevik movement and government. An era of antagonism ensued, and the popularity of contemporary Russian authors decreased in America. Immigrant and dissident writers, such as Ivan Bunin, Dmitry Merezhkovsky or Vasily Aksyonov,

were not so famous in the U.S. as their predecessors. And, Nabokov became a famous American writer after his 20-years career in Russian literature.

"Immigrant writers were banned in the Soviet Union. When I was a postgraduate, I had to get a special permission to Spetskhran (special repository in main libraries) to be able to read Nabokov's books.

"The Soviet Union was a country of secrets, while America seemed like a fantastic planet with Indians and cowboys for Russian boys and girls. In pre-revolutionary Russia, they became well-known thanks to Mayne Reid and Fenimore Cooper. Selecting work for translation was very serious. First, in order to be printed, the author had to share the same ideological position as the communist party or at least not criticize it. For example, Stalin came to hate the documentary book "Ten Days That Shook the World" by American journalist and writer John Reed because there were many records of his opponent Leo Trotsky's role in the October revolution, and the book praised by Lenin was not published in the USSR for 30 years until after Stalin's death.

Time will tell

"Only time gives us a notion of classic literature. You just have to see the place a writer made in every period of history. There were times when Leo Tolstoy and Anton Chekhov were criticized. Who could imagine in the end of the 19th century that Arthur Rimbaud would ever be recognized a great poet? Who could say in the 1950s that Andrey Platonov sweeping streets in the center of Moscow would be considered a great author?"

Fact Box:

- * Pushkin's "The Captain's Daughter" was very popular and published many times in the U.S. under the name "Marie: A Story of Russian Love".
- * One of the first American writers who visited the USSR was Theodore Dreiser. He wrote the novel "Dreiser looks at Russia," which virtually created a new genre of documentary literature – "a journey into a new world."
- * Jack London was the most popular foreign writer in the USSR for many years.
- * Ernest Hemingway became his rival in the mid-century in Russia. Nearly every egghead man in the USSR had a portrait of the bearded Hemingway next to Russian poets Esenin and Vysotsky.
- * The heroine of William Faulkner's "The Mansion" is a deaf communist lady.

Russian Music Expands Its Appeal

Anna Pozdeeva

The Russian music scene has always seemed exotic to most foreign observers. Except for world known classical composers such as Tchaikovsky or Rachmaninoff and a few pop legends like t.A.T.u., there is little chance a random person from the West would be familiar with Russian contemporary music.

The demolishing of the Iron Curtain allowed Russian music to expand outside its borders. Perhaps one of the most famous of the groups to strike out into the international music scene was “Gorky Park,” the first Soviet band to appear on MTV. Their use of Soviet style stereotypes of Russian culture and wearing pseudo-traditional Russian costumes made them popular in the United States during the late ’80s and into the early ’90s.

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, international interest was focused on so-called Russian Rock, a music genre that appeared in the 1960s and became popular in the mid-1980s. Boris Grebenshchikov, more commonly known as BG, is considered the Grandfather of Russian Rock. He is the leader of “Aquarium,” a band formed in 1972 and still active today.

BG is one of the Russian musicians known worldwide. His debut solo-album, “Radio Silence,” was recorded in the U.K., Canada, and the United States, and released via Columbia Records in 1989. The disk entered the Billboard top 200 Album Chart at 198.

Nowadays, while crowds of Russians gather at mainstream music concerts, this



Tesla Boy

current music does not seem to be of any interest to international audiences. The music itself mostly copies Western pop music, simply replacing English lyrics with Russian. Meanwhile, Russian Indie groups such as “Motorama” and “Everything Is Made In China” are great examples of contemporary bands that have achieved international recognition.

“Over the last 10 years, the Western world’s expectations from Russian music basically shifted from t.A.T.u to the new Pussy Riot as something rebelling, provoking, wild and you can see this trend when speaking with journalists or promoters: ‘A new Pussy Riot? No? Ah, sorry, not interested,’” said Dmitry Kurkin, chief editor of Zvuki.ru, the oldest Russian online music media. “At the same time many Russian young musicians are obsessed with an idea of ‘Western quality’ and try to be as much non-Russian as possible, usually with very, very bad English.”

At the same time, there has been an increasing interest in Russian electronic music, particularly in the group PPK whose single ResuRection was the first Russian song entered into the U.K. Billboard Music Chart, reaching third place in 2000.

Another Russian electronic musician, Anton Sergeev, known by the stage name Anton Maskeliade, is one of the first artists in the world who uses leap-motion technology. He creates music and visual effects as part of all his shows. The Guardian calls his music “intriguing and frightening.”

This year, Maskeliade played at Glaston-

bury, one of the oldest summer open air music festivals in Britain. According to Rolling Stone Russia, he was the first Russian musician ever invited to play there.

“I believe achievements happen anyway if you just follow the thing you like to do,” Maskeliade said. “The most difficult is to find this special area (music, photo, producing) that drives you on. And when it happens, just pull the trigger and keep going. It doesn’t matter where you are from. You’ll get your success.”

Some Russian bands seem to play more shows in Europe and the U.S. than in Russia. “Telsa Boy,” a synth-pop project formed by Anton Sevidov in 2008, fits into this category. The Q magazine has called them “The best thing to come from Russia since vodka.”

“Tesla Boy” is still among the most appreciated Russian bands. However, sometimes it seems that foreign fans and critics love them more than Russian ones. They released their debut studio album “Modern Thrills” in 2010, and their second LP “The Universe Made of Darkness” in 2013. Both of releases were successful and acclaimed by music critics. Recently the band has started a campaign on the crowd-funding website Planeta.ru to get money for their third release.

“Unfortunately, today there are few groups from Moscow who have an opportunity to go on tours abroad, few groups are known there,” Sevidov said. “So, every time I go on stage abroad, in a way, I feel a responsibility to represent the Russian modern music scene.”



Sergey Babenko

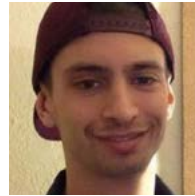
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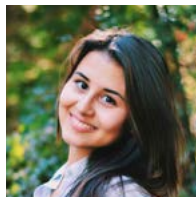
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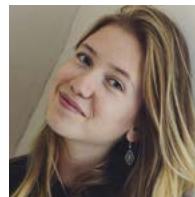
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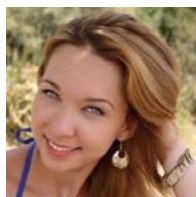
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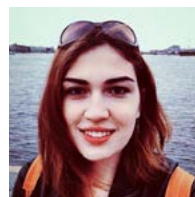
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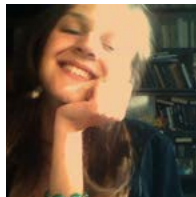
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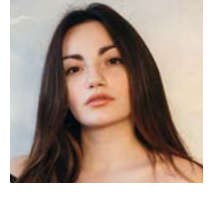
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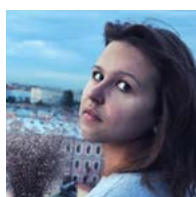
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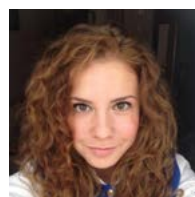
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