

Something Old, Something New

Young orchestra plays new classical music, AAT



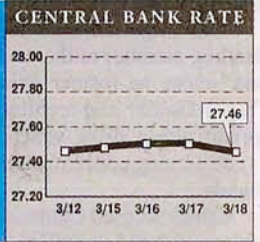
St. Pete Low In Safety Poll

Helsinki rated second in world survey, Page 3.



Unimilk Picks The White Stuff

Investment in a new line seen as well-timed, Page 5.



Piotrovsky: Level Misfit Buildings

By Vladimir Kovalev
STAFF WRITER

As City Hall plans to introduce new restrictions on what can be built in the city center, Mikhail Piotrovsky, the director of the State Hermitage Museum has produced a list of some of St. Petersburg's newest buildings that he says should be demolished.

"They damage the architectural-historic appearance of the city," Piotrovsky said Tuesday at a briefing on construction plans organized by information agency Rosbalt with the participation of City Hall officials.

Piotrovsky's list is almost identical to one made by City Hall's committee for the state inspection and protection of historic monuments, or KGIOP. It includes buildings located at 4 Pochtamskaya Ulitsa, 60 Shpaleynaya Ulitsa, a new retail center on Kazanskaya Ulitsa near the Kazan Cathedral, the elite residential complex Silver Mirrors and a new apartment block next to the Rostral Columns.

Participants in the briefing presented draft guidelines that City Hall could offer to construction companies.

Piotrovsky said that under the guidelines any project in the city center should be the subject of a broad public discussion and permission to build should be granted only in exceptional circumstances.

"A strategy to save the cultural heritage should dampen the ambitions and aggressiveness of developers," he said.

Alexander Margolis, head of the International Charity Foundation to Protect St. Petersburg-Leningrad, said City Hall should inspect the draft guidelines carefully to allow developers to operate in the central part of St. Petersburg, which is basically falling apart.

"Ninety percent of buildings in the city center need to be renovated, including 1,500 that demand urgent measures," Margolis said at the briefing. "Every city has the developers it deserves to have."

But KGIOP head Vera Demytyeva said City Hall has little control over developers because the federal government, which does not take the opinion of the city administration into account, is approving major projects in the historic part of the city.

See PIOTROVSKY, Page 2



Big Feet A six-meter bronze sculpture of Peter the Great by Zurab Tsereteli, president of the Russian Academy of Artists, stands outside the Manezh where Tsereteli opened an exhibition of his work. It runs until April 8.

Chubais Eludes Assassins

By Douglas Busvine
REUTERS

MOSCOW — Anatoly Chubais, head of Russia's state power monopoly, survived an assassination attempt Friday by assailants who detonated a roadside bomb and sprayed his convoy with a hail of automatic gunfire.

The 49-year-old Chubais, one of Russia's best-known figures, came to prominence as the architect of post-Soviet economic reforms under which two dozen "oligarchs" acquired vast wealth while ordinary people suffered a huge slump in living standards.

He is now chief executive of Unified Energy System, and the prime mover behind reforms to introduce competition to the power sector of the world's largest country.

Chubais told a hastily arranged press briefing that he had been aware of a plan to kill him, but would not say who he suspected of carrying out the attack.

"I have an idea of who could have taken out a contract on me," a shaken but defiant Chubais said from the safety of UES headquarters in Moscow after the attempt. "We had reason to believe something like this might happen."

Chubais was traveling to work from his country home along a narrow stretch of the Minsk Highway at 9:30 a.m. when a roadside bomb rocked his two-car cortege and two attackers opened fire with automatic weapons.

Chubais said his armored BMW had been able to flee the scene despite being hit in the windscreen, hood and front tire.

Security guards for Chubais traveling in a Mitsubishi Lancer returned fire at the hitmen, who later escaped.

Police said the bomb blast had a force equivalent to at least 500 grams of TNT. Television footage from the scene showed a large crater at the side of a two-way highway through forest.

Boris Gryzlov, speaker of the lower house of parliament, was the highest-ranking official to condemn the attack. "I believe law enforcers will track down those who ordered and perpetrated this crime," he said.

See CHUBAIS, Page 2

Russian Envoy in Spat With Vilnius Paper

By Vladimir Kovalev
STAFF WRITER

Boris Tsepov, the Russian ambassador to Lithuania, is embroiled in a dispute with the foreign ministry of the Baltic State after accusing the Lithuanian media of lying as rumors spread in Vilnius last week that he might resign.

The rumors first appeared in the major local paper Lietuvos rytas as Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus declined Moscow's invitation to visit the Russian capital for 60th anniversary cel-

ebrations of the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II. The paper said Tsepov had failed to fulfill Kremlin orders to ensure Adamkus agreed to visit Moscow.

"For several months, Boris Tsepov kept assuring the Russian Foreign Ministry that Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus would come to Moscow. When President Adamkus announced that he wasn't going, the career of the ambassador was left hanging by a thread," the paper wrote.

Attendance at the celebrations has

been a source of friction between the Baltic States and Russia. The states were annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940, but the Red Army was chased out by the German army in 1941, before the Soviet Union retook the states at the end of the war. The Baltic governments consider the years 1945 to 1991 as an era of occupation, a view Moscow rejects. Latvia's president Vaira Vike-Freiberga is the only president who has accepted the Kremlin's invitation.

See LITHUANIA, Page 2

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The **St Petersburg Times**

All ABOUT TOWN

FRIDAY,
march 18, 2005



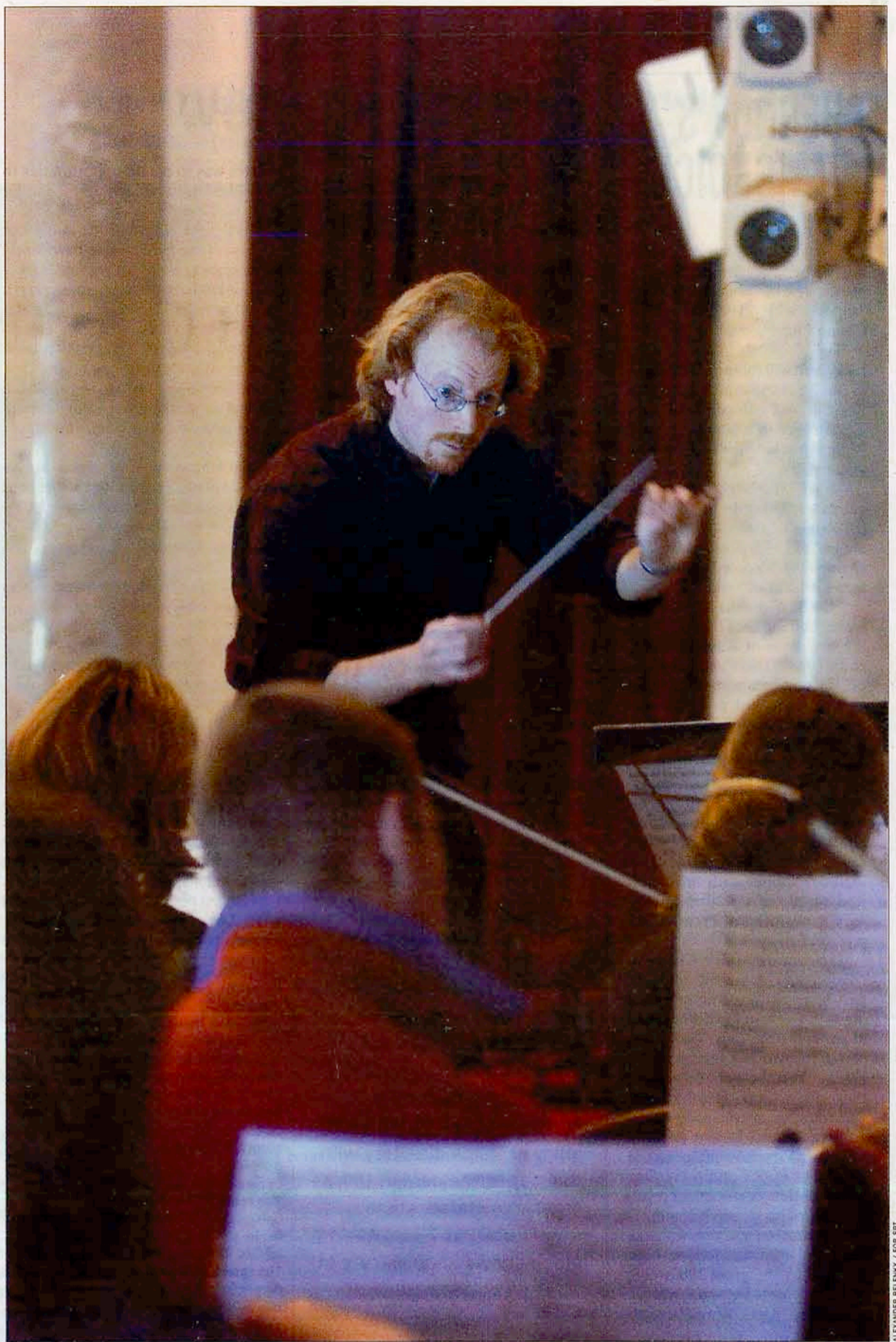
xi opera

The Mariinsky's new version of 'Madame Butterfly.'



xii music

Diva Julee Cruise returns to town this week.



U.S. conductor Jeffery Meyer, director of the St. Petersburg Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra, in rehearsals for the ensemble's concert this week (see story).

Something old, something new

music

By Galina Stolyarova
STAFF WRITER

Presenting new orchestral music while creating new insights into familiar masterpieces at the same concert is a challenging task. But this is exactly the aim of the St. Petersburg Chamber Philharmonic, an orchestra established in the city in 2002 by American conductor and pianist Jeffery Meyer and Singapore-born conductor Darrel Ang.

The orchestra's concert Sunday, called "A Journey Around the Globe: American and Russian Composers of the 20th-21st Centuries," features works by three living composers — Lawrence Dillon's 2001 "Amadeus Ex Machina," Sergei Slonimsky's 1985 Symphony No. 8 and Timofey Buzina's 2003 "Shaman Suite" — as well as two 20th-century jewels: Samuel Barber's 1939 violin concerto and Alexander Tcherepnin's 1924 Chamber Concerto for flute, violin and chamber orchestra.

Yekaterinburg-born Buzina, who turns 28 this year, is by far the youngest on the list.

"Shaman Suite" is said to have been inspired by shamanist culture, but the work doesn't directly refer to any particular tradition now in existence.

Dillon's "Amadeus Ex Machina" is described on the composer's web site as "a whimsical re-imagining of Mozart's 40th symphony from the somewhat disoriented perspective of a machine." The piece's title is a play on *deus ex machina*, the Greek theatrical convention in which a dramatic hero is rescued from an apparently hopeless situation by the eleventh-hour intervention of the gods.

In deconstructing the Mozart work, the composer weaves a string of fresh, varied themes through it. "It is a very fun piece," Meyer said. "There is, for instance, a distinct jazz feel in one of the sections."

What Meyer calls the evening's "candy" for the audience is Barber's magnificent violin concerto. "Barber's voice is so romantic and appealing," Ang said. "It shows that modern music is not all difficult."

The orchestra regularly performs widely recognized works by Mozart, Tchaikovsky and Beethoven but the core of their programs is the music of talented living composers. Such work is generally absent from local orchestras' repertoires.

John Adams' minimalist "Shaker Loops" (1983), George Walker's introspective "Lyric For Strings" (1946), and Galina Ustvolkskaya's hard-edged, modernist Symphony No. 4 from 1985/87 are cases in point.

Wittily branded by one critic as "a lady with a hammer," Ustvolkskaya is known for brutal dissonant textures and the unorthodox juxtaposition of instruments. Most of her works make challenging listening.

With each concert — the orchestra gives five or six performances a year — the program is the result of skillful and careful planning.

The idea of founding an orchestra came to Meyer and Ang when they first met in 2001 at a conductors' workshop in Czech Republic. St. Petersburg's the 300th anniversary in 2003 seemed like a good moment to start the new project.

Continued on page ii

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CHERNOV'S CHOICE

The week's most bizarre event might be Akvarium's performance at what is described as a "supper with candles" at the Casino Club Premier.

The formerly underground rock band will follow such people as Soviet-era lounge singer Iosif Kobzon and comedian Mikhail Zhvanetsky in a series of "Star Nights" marking the casino's 10th anniversary.

"Each 'Star Night' starts with guests gathering in the foyer of the Palkin restaurant where they are treated with piano music and champagne," according to Premier's official web site.

"Each night has a unique menu, and the chef compiles it in the traditions of Russian aristocratic cuisine that Palkin is proud of. The supper is accompanied by an entertainment program and prize draw; popular music groups play for guests."

According to the casino's spokesperson, tickets are available for 240, 290 and 340 "conditional units" with one unit equaling 29 rubles — prices thus range from \$253 to \$359. This includes supper with an unlimited supply of soft drinks. Akvarium performs at Premier at 8 p.m. on Friday.

U.S. vocalist **Julee Cruise** of "Twin Peaks" fame will also take part in an elitist event, performing with German band **Pluramon** at an "invitation-only, V.I.P." concert at the Moskva restaurant on Friday. For the general public, they will perform at Platforma on Saturday. See article, page xii.

French band **Louise Attaque** will play a French Institute-backed concert at PORT on Friday. One of the all-time best-selling French bands, Louise Attaque combines French chanson tradition with folk and punk, and is said to have been inspired by the great 1980s U.S. band Violent Femmes, which brought us "Kiss Off" and "Blister in the Sun."

The Femmes' former vocalist Gordon Gano even co-wrote and produced (with Warren Bruleigh) the band's debut album, recorded in his studio in Brussels, Belgium, and released in 1997. Louise Attaque's Russian tour also includes Moscow, Nizhny Novgorod and Yekaterinburg. Check out the band's official web site at www.louiseattaque.com.

Described as "Hungary's wildest," the avant-rock trio **Tudosok** will perform at Platforma on Sunday. Tudosok are friends of the local art-punk band NOM and performed at Big Ear, arguably the best-known festival of experimental music in Hungary, which Tudosok's founder drMarias promotes.

Part of a Hungarian Cultural Season, which will last until summer and possibly bring one or two more Hungarian bands to the city, the tour will also include drMarias reciting his poetry at the Mayakovsky Library on Monday. See article, page xii.

Nostalgic old rockers this week include **Jethro Tull**, who turned out to be immensely popular locally when they first played in the city in 2003. The British prog rockers, who have managed to keep two members on board from their better days in the 1970s, will perform at Oktyabrsky Concert Hall.

— By Sergey Chernov

Something new

Continued from page i

"I have always been very passionate about new music, and I told Jeffery that in Russia in general and St. Petersburg in particular there is an obvious lack of appreciation of it," said Ang, who has been studying in the St. Petersburg State Conservatory's Orchestral and Operatic Conducting Department under Mariinsky Theater conductor Leonid Korchmar since 2000. "There are a lot of great gifted composers here but they aren't being recognized."

In Ang's opinion, one reason for the neglect of contemporary composers' talents is the very conservative taste of the St. Petersburg concert-going public.

"Look at the program of the St. Petersburg Philharmonic — it is always all the same list: the same concertos, the same symphonies by the same composers played season after season," Ang said. "At the end of the day it gets impossibly tiring."

Although both Meyer and Ang are very enthusiastic about new music, the orchestra's co-founders stopped short of focusing the repertoire exclusively on new compositions.

"I am very fond of new music, but the problem with it is that once you begin programming new music with any ensemble, especially if the orchestra becomes a 'new music ensemble,' then you are marginalized," Meyer said. "You are put into that 'new music' corner, and people just won't listen to you."

The idea behind founding the or-

chestra was to create opportunities to unveil new music without turning wider audiences away.

"We make sure that the audiences get something familiar and have a new experience as well," Meyer said.

This kind of orchestra, which plays a mix of new music and already famous works, is unusual. In most cases, ensembles tend to focus on a particular sphere, be it baroque music or new music.

"To put a piece of Mozart against a piece of Schnittke is meant to put both works in a new environment," Meyer said.

When he studied the piano, Meyer enjoyed playing difficult new pieces as well as practicing familiar works by Haydn. "[The Haydn work] feels so clean and sounds so different in this context," he said.

The orchestra's mission is not only to introduce new music but also to reinvigorate old music, ensuring that all music finds its place to live.

"The old music keeps being put in the same museum box," Meyer said. "But it is a living art and should be rescued from this approach."

As Ang points out, the convenient thing about new music is that it is, in most cases, designed for small ensembles. Forming a large ensemble of able musicians with a keen interest in the subject — especially in such a notoriously hidebound place as St. Petersburg — was a challenge.

The first people to join the orchestra were Ang's fellow musicians from the Conservatory, who were enthusiastic to

The St. Petersburg Chamber Philharmonic is a young and independent orchestra that pioneers new music while remaining true to the classical tradition

explore music they had previously only heard of, and who had the versatility to perform it. Few of them chose to play a contemporary work during their audition for the orchestra.

Now, the orchestra features several dozen young musicians. Some of them are in their final years of the Conservatory, while others come from the Mariinsky Symphony Orchestra, the State Cappella and the St. Petersburg Philharmonic.

Last year the orchestra was rehearsing John Adams' "Shaker Loops." For most of the musicians it was their first chance to play a minimalist work. At the beginning of the first rehearsal Meyer was on the receiving end of some distrustful looks from under his players' brows.

"They were looking at me as if asking 'What the hell are we doing, why on earth are we playing this music?'" Meyer recalls with a smile. "Toward the end of the rehearsal period they figured the language of the piece, they dug in, and they played it very well. After the concert many of them came to me to say how grateful they were to have been exposed to that beautiful piece."

For Meyer, these words of thanks remain one of the greatest highlights of the orchestra's history.

In the beginning, the musicians were apprehensive, uncertain about what to

expect, Ang remembers. "Sometimes they'd heard of the composer but didn't have a chance to listen to the music," he said.

"We promised the musicians that nothing they play is going to be boring, that they will be exposed to new challenging music, new sounds, new ways of thinking," Ang said.

Meyer feels there is a gulf between Russia and the United States in terms of musical repertoire. And if in the U.S., where the idea of private theatrical companies and orchestras is already deeply rooted and contemporary music gets performed, in Russia getting a new work played is a near-hopeless struggle.

"It takes time for the general public to open up to new things," Ang said. "The conservatism of Russian audiences is not their fault at all. Neither is it a lack of sophistication. There are highly educated people in the audience, and it is only that they are used to a certain type of music, which they have been brought up with."

The St. Petersburg Chamber Philharmonic is among those who could make them reconsider. On Sunday, concertgoers will get a demonstration.

"A Journey Around the Globe" starts at 7 p.m. on Sunday in the Shuvalovsky Palace, 21 Fontanka Embankment. Admission is free (donations welcome). www.st-ppc.org

Dates and times are correct at the time of publication, but last-minute changes are not infrequent, so it's best to check using the phone numbers at the end of each entry or in the directory with the map in the center. Unless otherwise stated, stage events start at 7 p.m. All stage shows and films are in Russian unless noted.

STAGES

friday, march 18

ballet

Tanya Tanya Vladimir Tumanov directs Olga Mukhina's romantic comedy about six men and women as they fall in and out of love. *Vasilyevsky Ostrov Theater of Satire, Small Stage, 7:30 p.m.*

opera

PREMIERE! Madame Butterfly Mariusz Trelinski's 2005 staging of Puccini's tragic opera about an American soldier who leaves his Japanese wife, driving her to suicide. Libretto by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa, based on David Belasco's stage version of a magazine story by John Luther Long. Conductor Valery Gergiev. *Mariinsky Theater*
The Queen of Spades Tchaikovsky's opera, based on the Pushkin story, staged by Stanislav Gaudasinsky, with traditional sets and singing. *Mussorgsky Theater*
Adriana Lecouvreur Yuri Alexandrov directs Francesco Cilea's opera about the famous actor of the Comedie-Francaise. *Hermitage Theater*

concert

Chamber Concert Haydn, Beethoven, Chopin. Zhanna Abdullaeva (violin), Oleg Sendetsky (viola), Alena Parijskaya (piano). *Sheremetev's Fontanny House, 34 Nab. Reki Fontanki, tel. 272-4524, 6:30 p.m.*

theater

Out of Order, or No. 13 A situation comedy by British dramatist Ray Cooney, directed by Vladimir Golub, about a government minister, a young woman with whom he is about to

embark on an affair, and a dead body. *Alexandriinsky Theater*
Heartbreak House George Bernard Shaw's play about an artful octogenarian. A comical family portrait. *Bolshoi Drama Theater*
The Stranger Svetlana Vaganova directs Albert Camus' play. *Bolshoi Drama Theater, Small Stage*
Krechinsky's Marriage The classic 19th-century comedy by Alexander Sukhovo-Kobylin about a scoundrel who tries to shift his gambling debt through a fake marriage. Staged by Sergei Kagin. *Akimov Comedy Theater*
The Fears of Tsar Solomon Pyotr Shereshevsky directs the story of an amorous farmer and his love for an ageing Parisian actress. *Komissarzhevskaya Drama Theater*
The Queen of Czardas Alexander Belinsky directs Imre Calman's operetta based on a play by Yuri Shishmonin. *Musical Comedy Theater, 13 Italiyanskaya Ul.*
Treasure Island Anatoly Dubanov's musical adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's adventure tale about a boy on a treasure hunt with pirates. *Baltiysky Dom, noon*
Romeo and Juliet Boris Tseitlin directs Shakespeare's classic tale of doomed young love. *Baltiysky Dom, 6 p.m.*
Tango Semyon Spivak directs Slavomir Mrozek's once-banned political parable. *Molodyozhny Theater*

PREMIERE! All Life Ahead Anatoly Praudin presents a play about the everyday fight for dignity and love. *Theater on Liteiny*
Don Juan A young cast graces Andrzej Buben's production of Moliere's cynical 1665 classic. *Vasilyevsky Ostrov Theater of Satire*
The Rainmaker Natalya Nikitina directs Richard Nash's play about all-conquering faith that gives one the opportunity to change the world. *Theater Dozhdei*
The Wedding Sergei Fedotov directs Gogo's much-loved play about a man who narrowly avoids getting married. *Priyut Komedianta Theater*

saturday, march 19

ballet

Esmeralda Nikolai Boyarchikov's production of Marius Petipa's dramatic and intense ballet set to a score by Cesare Pugni, based on Victor Hugo's novel "Notre Dame de Paris." *Mussorgsky Theater*

opera

La Traviata French director Charles Roubaud stages Verdi's classic about a consumptive courtesan and her lover, and how their relationship is destroyed by the hypocritical morals of 19th-century society. *Mariinsky Theater*
PREMIERE! The Rape of Lucretia Benjamin Britten's 1946 tragic chamber opera is a shocking early Christian tale, but can equally be viewed as a metaphor for wider brutality and inhumanity. *St. Petersburg Opera*

concert

Handel St. Petersburg Academic Symphonic Orchestra. Conductor Alexander Dmitriev. World Festival Choir. Soloists Olga Kondina, Zlata Bulychева, Algirdas Janutas (Lithuania), Alexander Morozov. *Shostakovich Philharmonic, Grand Hall*
Children's Musical School No.11 Pupils of piano department *Shostakovich Philharmonic, Small Hall*
International Festival From The Avant-Garde To The Present Day Scriabin, Kharkovsky, Vorobyov. Soloists Maria Polishkova (piano), Alexander Vechkunin, Olga Vitkalova (ballet dancers). *Zazerkalye Theater*
Mikhail Druskin Centenary Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Bartok, Schumann, Beethoven, Bach. Soloists Valentin Dmitriev (piano), Nikolay Mazhara (piano), Nina Seregina (piano), Vladimir Radchenkov (clavichin). *Conservatory Concert Hall, 3 Theater Square, M. Sadovaya, Sennaya, tel. 117-1070*

theater

PREMIERE! The Double Valery Fokin directs the what he claims is the first stage production of Dostoevsky's phantasmagoric novel. *Alexandriinsky Theater*
PREMIERE! Yekaterina Ivanovna Nikolai Pinigin directs Leonid Andreyev's pessimistic play about the battle of the sexes set in the 1920s. *Bolshoi Drama Theater*
Black and Red Vladimir Ivchenko directs a monoperformance based on plays by Samuel Beckett and Anton Chekhov. Music by Saint-Saens and Russian spiritual songs. *Bolshoi Drama Theater, Small Stage*
The Shadow Tatyana Kazakova revives Yevgeny Shvarts' satirical fable from 1940 about a man's relationship with his shadow based on a Hans Christian Andersen tale and originally suppressed by the Soviet authorities. *Akimov Comedy Theater*
Little Girl Vladislav Pazi directs Nina Berberova's play about a woman who invites her husband's lover to live in their house. *Lensoviet Theater*
PREMIERE! The Lower Depths The Nebolshoi Drama Theater presents a new version of the well-known Maxim Gorky play, directed by Lev Erenburg, where strange modern young people have a philosophical conversation with God and try to find themselves. *Lensoviet Theater, Small Stage*
French Pranks Alexander Isakov directs Jean-Jacques Bricaire's contemporary comedy. *Komissarzhevskaya Drama Theater*
A Ball in the Savoy Alexander Isakov directs a light-hearted and energetic operetta about adventures of the heart. *Musical Comedy Theater, 13 Italiyanskaya Ul.*
Treasure Island Anatoly Dubanov's musical adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's adventure tale about a boy on a treasure hunt with pirates. *Baltiysky Dom, noon*

Twelve Chairs Belinsky's play based on Ilf and Petrov's book about the adventures of two heroes, searching for treasures. *Baltiysky Dom, 6 p.m.*
Madame de Sade Semyon Spivak directs Yukio Mishima's overwrought, yet inspiring, play about the wife of the infamous Marquis de Sade. *Molodyozhny Theater*
King Lear Director Roman Smirnov stages Shakespeare's tragedy tracing a journey from the "dark world of envy and betrayal to the light of Christian tragedy." *Vasilyevsky Ostrov Theater of Satire*
Sirena and Victoria Viktor Kramer directs Alexander Galin's light comedy about whether a friendship can exist between a science professor and a New Russian. *Mironov Theater*
The Rainmaker Natalya Nikitina directs Richard Nash's play about all-conquering faith that gives one the opportunity to change the world. *Theater Dozhdei*
PREMIERE! The Two on a Swing Venyamin Filshinsky directs this touching story of two people who, finding themselves in a difficult situation, discuss faith and the meaning of life. *Priyut Komedianta Theater*

sunday, march 20

ballet

Swan Lake Tchaikovsky's ever-popular ballet in four acts with a prologue about the tragic fate of a swan princess. Musical Director and Conductor — Valery Gergiev, choreographer K.Sergeyev. *Mariinsky Theater, evening*
La Bayadere Marius Petipa's choreography, set to Ludwig Minkus' score, tells a tragic love story of a bayadere, or professional dancer, in India, who is punished for her love of a warrior destined to marry the king's daughter. *Mussorgsky Theater, evening*

opera

Oedipus Rex/ Le Rossignol Two Stravinsky one-act operas, based on tales from antiquity. Conducted by Valery Gergiev. *Mariinsky Theater, 11:30 a.m.*
The Wizard of Oz A musical version of L. Frank Baum's story about Dorothy and her friends' journey to a wizard who will solve their problems. *Mussorgsky Theater, noon*
La Traviata Verdi's opera about a lady gone astray. *Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatory Theater*

concert

Masterpieces of Western European Music Gala Concert Opera favorites *St. Petersburg Opera*
Symphony Music Dedicated to the 90th anniversary of Svyatoslav Richter's birth. St. Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra. Conductor Nikolai Alexeyev. Soloist Elizabeth Leonskaya. Schubert, Tchaikovsky. *Shostakovich Philharmonic, Grand Hall*

FESTIVAL From The Avant-Garde To The Present Day International Festival Cage, Satie, Berg, Bartok. St. Petersburg Conservatoire Modern Music Ensemble. Artistic director - Igor Vorobiev *Shostakovich Philharmonic, Small Hall*

American and Russian Composers from the 20th Century to the Present Day Grig, Schosson, Tchaikovsky. Ravil Martynov St. Petersburg Symphony Orchestra. Conductor John Bey. Soloist Alexander Shustin (violin). *Shostakovich Philharmonic, Grand Hall*

The St. Petersburg Chamber Philharmonic Conducted by Jeffery Meyer (USA) and featuring Russian-American violin virtuoso, Anastasia Khitruk. The concert will feature works by Alexander Tcherenpin, Samuel Barber, Timofey Buzina, Sergei Slonimsky (Professor, Rimsky-Korsakov St. Petersburg State Conservatory), and Lawrence Dillon (Professor, North Carolina School of the Arts). The concert will be followed by a public discussion with Professor Slonimsky and Professor Dillon. *Shuvalovsky Palace, 21 Naberezhnaya Reki Fontanki, M. Mayakovskaya, Gostiny Dvor, tel. 314-7053, fax. 313-4909*

theater
Pygmalion George Bernard Shaw's first and greatest popular triumph, about a flower seller who conquers high society through elocution. Directed by Alexander Belinsky. *Alexandriinsky Theater*

Family Portrait With a Stranger Alexei Maximov directs Sergei Lobozerov's contemporary play about the romance between an urban artist and a rural girl. *Bolshoi Drama Theater, noon*

The Moth Nikolai Pinigin directs Pyotr Glabiniy's play about the sudden transformation of a soldier into a girl and its dramatic consequences. However, it is not a play about transsexualism or army sexual politics but a parable about conventionality. *Bolshoi Drama Theater, evening*

The Apple Thief Tatyana Kazakova stages this play by young Moscow writer Ksenia Dragunskaya, about a woman who believes in freedom above money and power. *Akimov Comedy Theater*

You Can Never Tell Vladislav Pazi directs a production of George Bernard Shaw's 1899 ensemble piece about a family's efforts to live in harmony, which has parallels to problems in today's family life. *Lensoviet Theater*

On Life, Death and Love A one-person show starring Tamara Ambrosimova, based on themes from works by Bunin, Chekhov and Leskov. *Komissarzhevskaya Drama Theater, Small Stage, 7.30 p.m.*

Little Scarlet Flower Vladimir Tykko directs Regina Lyaleikits and Oleg Kulkovich in Sergei Aksakov's story about good conquering evil and how the kind heart of a young girl overcomes a big, bad witch. *Baltiisky Dom, noon*

The Substitute Joran Sarring directs Swedish playwright Selma Lagerlef's tale about human encounters with forest trolls. *Baltiisky Dom, Small Stage, 2 p.m.*

Cyrano de Bergerac Vladimir Tykko directs Edmond Rostand's tale of the incorrigible duelist with a large nose who writes love letters to his lady, conveying them via his rival. *Baltiisky Dom, 6 p.m.*

FESTIVAL! The Ancient World on St. Petersburg's Stages: Medea Alexei Uteganov directs the legend from Greek mythology, interpreted by Euripides and Jean Anouilh, about an enchantress - here a symbol of strong women. *Molodyozhny Theater*

The Duel A. Getman stages a version of Chekhov's short story of the same name about the life of the Russian intelligentsia at the turn of the 20th century. *Theater on Liteiny*

Uncle Fyodor, Cat and Mutt Dmitry Maslennikov stages Eduard Uspensky's bright and gentle tale of the boy Fyodor who brings home a stray cat and dog. *Vasilyevsky Ostrov Theater of Satire, noon*

The Charmed April V. Koifman directs a performance about women's fate. *Vasilyevsky Ostrov Theater of Satire*

Dead Souls Vlad Furman directs Sergei Russkin, Nikolai Dik and Alexei Feukin in an adaptation of Gogol's novel. Staged in memory of Arkady Raikin. *Mironov Theater*

How He Lied to Her Husband Subtitled "A Warning to Playgoers," this one-act Shaw play targets the fatuous, idle rich and their desire for culture with wicked comic timing and a bit of physical comedy thrown in for good measure. *Mironov Theater*

Unattainable Director Igor Konyayev of the Maly Drama Theater stages William Somerset Maugham's 1916 play, also known as "Caroline," a comedy about a woman who loses her admirers after she is widowed and becomes "available." *Priyut Komedianta Theater*

monday, march 21

ballet
Esmeralda Nikolai Boyarchikov's production of Marius Petipa's dramatic and intense ballet set to a score by Cesare Pugni, based on

Victor Hugo's novel "Notre Dame de Paris." *Mussorgsky Theater*

concert
Bach The Pocket Symphony early music ensemble. Artistic director and soloist Nazar Kozhukhar (violin). Soloist Hibla Gerzmava (soprano) *Shostakovich Philharmonic, Small Hall*

Chamber Concert Slonimsky, Tsytovich, Rogalev, Zhelinsky, Oskolkov, Petrov, Stetsuk, Tikhomirov. Teachers and students of the Folk Instruments Department *Conservatory Concert Hall, 3 Theater Square, M. Sadovaya, Sennaya, tel. 117-1070*

Symphony Concert Beethoven, Weber, Mendelssohn, Brahms. Hermitage Orchestra. Conductor Andreas Schpierr *Hermitage Theater*

theater
Run for Your Wife! Ray Cooney's masterful farce about a bigamist, John Smith, whose wives live on two sides of the same street. Directed by R. Samgin. *Akimov Comedy Theater*

You Can Never Tell Vladislav Pazi directs a production of George Bernard Shaw's 1899 ensemble piece about a family's efforts to live in harmony, which has parallels to problems in today's family life. *Lensoviet Theater*

The Prince and the Pauper Vladimir Tykko directs Nikolai Denisov's stage adaptation of Mark Twain's famous story about trading places. *Baltiisky Dom, 12 a.m., 6 p.m.*

Culdoon A classic English detective yarn, written by Edgar Wallace and staged by Valery Grishko, about six people searching for a killer - who turns out to be one of them. *Mironov Theater*

Pro Turandot Andrei Moguchy's version of the famous Carlo Gozzi tale "Princess Turandot," about a fierce princess, who cuts off the heads of the amorous princes who could not guess her riddles. *Priyut Komedianta Theater*

tuesday, march 22

ballet
La Sylphide Elsa Marianna von Rosen stages Levenshold's 19th-century Romantic ballet with choreography by Nikolai Boyarchikov about a young Scot who falls in love with a beautiful sylph on the eve of his wedding. *Mussorgsky Theater*

Ballet Evening Ballet favorites *Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatory Theater*

opera
PREMIERE! Madame Butterfly Mariusz Trelinski stages Puccini's tragic opera about an American soldier who leaves his Japanese wife, driving her to suicide. Conducted by Valery Gergiev. *Mariinsky Theater*

concert
Special concert Children's Land. Knayfel, Ustvol'skaya, Petrov, Shumilov, Kabalevsky, Prokofiev, Banevich. Symphony Orchestra of St. Petersburg Philharmonic Society. Artistic director and conductor Peter Gribanov. St. Petersburg Boys Choir. Artistic director Vadim Pchelkin. Soloists Feodor Abaza (piano), Semyon Gurevich (violin). *Shostakovich Philharmonic, Grand Hall*

Piano Recital Leonid Zaichik. Mendelssohn, Schubert *Shostakovich Philharmonic, Small Hall*

FESTIVAL International Spring Festival of Youth Choirs and Orchestras: Neva Meetings Works by Lasso, Schuts, Willan, Arensky, Brahms, Dello Jojo and American folk songs performed by the Choir of Chamber Singers of Tennessee University *Conservatory Concert Hall, 3 Theater Square, M. Sadovaya, Sennaya, tel. 117-1070*

theater
A Comedy From Our Life Vladimir Golub directs Nadezhda Ptushkina's contemporary play about an old maid who finds love with a New Russian. *Alexandriinsky Theater*

California Suite Neil Simon's romantic comedy revolves around a trio of vacationing couples staying at the same hotel. Directed by Nikolai Pinigin. *Bolshoi Drama Theater*

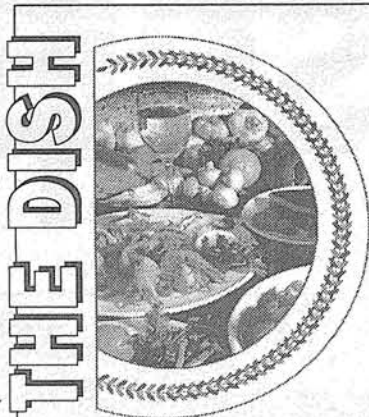
A Night in Venice Vladimir Vorobyov directs his own comedy about a man on the verge of retirement whose friends present him with a journey to Venice, where he meets a beautiful stranger. *Akimov Comedy Theater*

The Elder Son Igor Vladimirov directs Alexander Vampilov's play about fathers and sons and the collision between two generations. *Lensoviet Theater*

PREMIERE! Vaal Alexander Morfov stages a musical performance, based on Bertold Brecht's play about the life and death of a famous bard. *Komissarzhevskaya Drama Theater*

Snow White and the Seven Dwarves Vladimir Tykko directs the children's tale from a play by Oleg Tabakov and Leonid Ustinov. *Baltiisky Dom, noon*

Fantasies, or Six Personages Waiting For the Wind by the Farces Theater Viktor Kramer's directs this colorful musical show set to music by Vivaldi, Conti, Ravel, and Shostakovich. *Baltiisky Dom, evening*



By Angelina Davydova
 SPECIAL TO THE ST. PETERSBURG TIMES

As winter draws to a close and ice on the River Neva starts to melt, Russians have been celebrating Maslenitsa, a week of festivities that concluded last Sunday.

The traditional festival, which would probably be called "Pancake Week" in English, corresponds with the Shrovetide festival of the Christian calendar. During Maslenitsa, Russians indulge their fondness for pancakes (with various fillings) to the full.

Other festive events that traditionally take place during the week include music and street festivals and the burning of an effigy representing the destruction of the old and the regenerative processes of nature. The festival culminates on "Maslenitsa Day," which always falls on a Sunday. Maslenitsa is the gluttonous run-up to Lent, the traditional period of fasting in the Christian calendar, but like many Christian festivals, the roots of Maslenitsa are pagan.

Pancakes, being round, hot and yellow, represent the sun, giver of life and, more importantly, bringer of warmth and spring after a long, arduous winter. One can only imagine how early Slavs welcomed the arrival of springtime after a harsh winter unrelied by central heating or other benefits of post-industrial society.

Of course, the pancake, or blin, is a

Here comes the sun

Blinny Domik
 8 Kolokolnaya Ulitsa. Tel: 315 9915
 Open from 11.30 a.m. through 11.30 p.m.
 Menu in Russian and English. Major credit cards accepted.
 Meal for two with drinks 830 rubles (\$29.60)

staple part of the national cuisine. Traditional fillings include meat, caviar and herring, although there are sweet fillings as well, and pancakes go well with just about anything. The traditional Russian pancake is quite small - about the size of a saucer - and leavened, that is to say, it has risen with the aid of yeast.

In St. Petersburg, there is no shortage of bliny outlets. Chainaya Lozhka (Teaspoon), a rapidly expanding chain of bliny restaurants, has almost cornered the market for fast-food-style bliny eating in the city.

But the queen of bliny houses in the city is still Blinny Domik, located on Kolokolnaya Ulitsa near Vladimirskaaya Ploshchad (and metro station), with a range of fillings that Chainaya Lozhka can only dream of.

The irresistibly Old World decor of Blinny Domik is one of its chief attractions. The tables and chairs are fashioned out of roughly hewn wood, which lends a traditional, cozy atmosphere to the interior. Staff are polite, swift and professional, and happy to give advice.

The restaurant has a newly designed menu (the one before was a little hard to understand) in Russian and English. The soups and starters are good and include a hearty meat soup (*solyanka*), a noodle soup with chicken and mushrooms or the delightfully unusual three-cabbage dish, a hot starter with three sorts of cabbage, mixed with

apples and raisins, in a special sour-cream-based dressing (all 115 rubles, \$4.10).

The range of bliny on offer is quite amazing, and prices vary depending on fillings. From "Tsar Pancakes" (35-280 rubles, \$1.25-\$10), to drop scones (100 rubles, \$3.57), to "scones from other regions" (115 rubles, \$4.10). There is also a selection of no-yeast pancakes - the flat-as-a-pancake pancakes which prevail in the West. The range of fillings is too wide to relate in detail, but all tastes from vegetarian to meat to fish are catered for. Dessert pancakes with fruit or other sweet fillings round off any bliny feast.

A useful feature of the menu is the inclusion of waiting times noted under each dish to help diners decide how long they are prepared to wait for their meal.

There is a full range of drinks on offer, but when I go to Blinny Domik, I usually have the sweetly befuddling honey beer (*medovukha* or mead at 45 rubles/\$1.60 for a third of a liter), which is possibly the best in the city, or *sbiten* - tea with herbs and lime, with or without red wine, for 45 rubles, \$1.60.

Maslenitsa may be over for another year, but if you are in Russia, you don't need an excuse to eat pancakes - it is a national tradition - and Blinny Domik keeps the tradition very much alive.

Pippi Longstocking Astrid Lindgren's play about a footloose and fancy-free redhead with the infamous pointy braids. *Theater on Liteiny, noon*

The Cunning Maid Carlo Goldoni's comedy about Argentina, a maid who weaves a web of intrigue in the name of love. Directed by Larisa Artyomova. *Theater on Liteiny, evening*

Pippi Longstocking Astrid Lindgren's play about the footloose and fancy-free redhead with the infamous pointy braids. *Vasilyevsky Ostrov Theater of Satire*

The Picture of Dorian Gray Vlad Furman directs Oscar Wilde's tale of a man who possesses the gift of eternal youth and whose carefree antics scandalize society. *Mironov Theater*

wednesday, march 23

ballet
Swan Lake The Yury Petukhov Theater of Classical Ballet performs Tchaikovsky's romantic classic. *Hermitage Theater*

opera
Peter the Great The modern-day premiere of an opera by Donizetti about the founder of St. Petersburg. The opera was thought to be lost after originally premiering in Venice in 1815. *St. Petersburg Opera*

concert
FESTIVAL International Spring Festival of Youth Choirs and Orchestras: Neva Meetings Russian and U.S. musicians perform works by Chesnokov, Thompson, Bortnyansky, Ellington, and Copeland *Shostakovich Philharmonic, Grand Hall*

Evening Of Violin Music Maxim Fedotov. Piano by Galina Petrova. Prokofiev, Wagner, Gounod, Verdi *Shostakovich Philharmonic, Small Hall*

Chamber Concert Cimarosa, Caccini, Mozart, Bach, Puccini. Yelena Senkevich (soprano), Maxim Bulatov (basso), Sona Abramyan (piano). *Kochneva House, 41 Naberezhnaya Fontanki, M. Gostiny Dvor, tel. 110-4002*

theater
The Marriage Alexander Galibin directs Gogol's grotesque farce about a man who narrowly escapes getting married. *Alexandriinsky Theater*

Three Sisters and Uncle Vanya Marina Gavrilova directs her own piece based on themes from Chekhov's dramas. *Alexandriinsky Theater, Small Stage*

Dear Pamela A comedy by American dramatist John Patrick about three petty criminals who plan to murder an old woman to collect her life insurance. Directed by Andrei Maksimov. *Bolshoi Drama Theater*

Love Letters L. Shuvalova directs A.R. Gurney's play about the values of upper middle-class WASP America, following the correspondence between a staid, dutiful lawyer and an unstable artist. *Bolshoi Drama Theater, Small Stage*

The Seagull Lev Dodin directs Chekhov's well-worn play, widely known as the first modernist drama. *Maly Drama Theater - Theater of Europe*

Life Is No Bed of Roses Tatyana Kazakova directs Alexander Ostrovsky's play about the life and love of a Moscow merchant, known in Russian as "Ne vsoy kotu maslennitsa." *Akimov Comedy Theater*

A Bed for Three Vladimir Petrov stages Milorad Pavic's play that tells an abridged version of the history of humanity. *Lensoviet Theater*

PREMIERE! Schweitzer's Namesake Alexander Isakov directs Alexander Schenderovich's contemporary satire. *Komissarzhevskaya Drama Theater*

The Black Chicken A production of the short story by Alexander Pogorelsky. *Baltiisky Dom, noon*

Vokhlyaki iz Goloplekov by the Farces Theater Vladimir Kramer's staging based on themes from the plays of Ivan Turgenev *Baltiisky Dom*

Cries From Odessa Semyon Spivak directs his students from the Academy of Theater Arts in this adaptation of Isaac Babel's play "Sunset." *Molodyozhny Theater*

Bouratino Sergey Svirko directs one of the most famous children's tales by Alexei Tolstoy *Theater on Liteiny, 12 a.m.*

The Peasant Mistress Alexander Petrov directs a musical version of Pushkin's short story. *Theater on Liteiny, evening*

The Adventures of Hamster and Gopher A compassionate tale about the friendship of a hamster and a gopher. *Vasilyevsky Ostrov Theater of Satire, noon*

The Bankrupt Modest Abramov stages Alexander Ostrovsky's satire on the 19th-century banking world. The work was banned when it first came out. *Vasilyevsky Ostrov Theater of Satire, evening*

Enter a Free Man Georgy Tovstogonov Jr. directs Tom Stoppard's witty play based around a monologue by a frustrated inventor. *Mironov Theater*

These Free Butterflies Valery Filonov directs Leonid Gersh's play about the love between a young actor and a blind man. *Priyut Komedianta Theater*

continued on page VIII

C A F E - B A R

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