

By Yury Klavdiev
Translated by John Freedman
Directed by Joseph Ritsch

Towson University Department of Theatre Arts presents



the Polar
Truth

NEW
RUSSIAN
DRAMA
VOICES IN A
SHIFTING AGE

www.newrussiandrama.org

Conversations After the Play

Please join us for a series of post-performance conversations about the play and contemporary Russian society. Discussions will begin shortly after the performance and last for approximately thirty minutes.

November 12th with Yury Urnov, Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence and Russian director on playwright Yury Klavdiev

November 13th with dramaturgy students and the cast of *The Polar Truth* on the social issues in the play

Towson University Department of Theatre Arts in association with the
Center for International Theatre Development, presents

The Polar Truth

By Yury Klavdiev

Translated by John Freedman

Director	Joseph W. Ritsch
Stage Manager	Kaila Ricciardi
Technical Director	Stephanie Holland
Set Design	Brendan Leahy
Lighting Design	Todd Staffieri
Sound Design	Matt Gahs
Costume Design	Rebecca Eastman and The Ensemble
Original Music	Michael Perrie
Dramaturg On Demand	April Baldwin
Fight Choreographer	Lindsey Nixon
Poster/Program Cover Graphic Designer	Kate Bateman
Kid	Francis Cabatac
Volodya	Vince Constantino
Sveta	Lindsey Nixon
Ira	Lacy Reily
Nettles	Aaron Lempert
Dandelions	Benjamin Buhrman
Marina	Caitlyn Joy
Tapeworm	Todd Herman
Sasha	Michael Perrie
Police Officers	Ryan C. Airey, Alex Kafarakis, and Hannah Lewis'
Dramaturgy Team	Qituwra Anderson, April Baldwin, Eric Boelsche, Abby Grimsley, Lauren Guy, Rachel Harrell, Jon Kevin Lazarus, Kate Lilley, and Kaila Ricciardi.
Production Manager for Towson University's Russia Season	Cat Hagner
Dramaturg for Towson University's Russia Season	Robyn Quick
Time	the present
Place	Norilsk, Siberia, a city with no trees

The New Russian Drama Season

By the end of the 1990s, young people who were raised in the Soviet Union and discovering themselves as adults amidst the promise and chaos of a society undergoing a similar process of discovery, started bringing their unique generational perspectives to the stage. In a wave of writing that was soon dubbed “new drama,” playwrights created work that blends frank discussions of contemporary social issues with bold experiments in theatrical style. For much of the twentieth century, such writing was not seen on stage in Russia. Dramatic texts were censored and only theatrical production could hint at a potential critical spirit or individual sentiment beneath the approved language. Thus the new drama rang out a startling and inspiring note to fellow Russians. The playwrights have been greeted by their peers as the heroes of a new era who are following in long line of Russian literary figures by bringing new artistic vision to the 21st century in much the same way that authors like Anton Chekhov spoke to the dawn of the 20th century. Throughout the first decade of the 21st century, playwrights like Maksym Kurochkin, Yury Klavdiev, Olga Mukhina and Vyacheslav Durnenkov, have continued to create diverse and compelling visions of life in this shifting age.

For students and audiences in the United States, those visions offer an exciting experience of a life that is at once familiar and unknown. The search to find one’s true path amidst a deluge of conflicting influences, the struggle to create a new community when the one we were promised unexpectedly and cruelly dissolves, the longing for a love that continually eludes our grasp – these narratives will resonate for us in the sardonic wit of Kurochkin, the vibrant imagery of Klavdiev, the lyrical poetry of Mukhina and the idiosyncratic characters of Durnenkov. Yet the plays also take us into everyday experiences of people whose lives most of us have not had the opportunity to encounter. Given the historic tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States, as well as the environment of misunderstanding that still permeates our country’s relationship with Russia, insights we might gain about this culture from the plays seem particularly timely and necessary.

The desire to engage with these plays, and through them with the people and the culture that created them, gave birth to our New Russian Drama Project. Inspired by the work of Philip Arnoult’s Center for International Theatre Development, which has been building bridges between theatre artists in the U.S. and Russia for over a decade, students and faculty in the Department of Theatre Arts have been learning about contemporary Russian theatre and its people for the last three years. Seven members of the theatre faculty visited Russia. We attended performances, we conversed with fellow artists, and, yes, we even drank a little vodka. Over that time we developed this project in collaboration with CITD and partners in Russia, Moscow Times Arts Editor John Freedman and director Yury Urnov. In order to help bring new Russian drama to audiences in the United States, we commissioned translations of new plays. We studied the work in classes and brought in guest artists from Russia – including Yury Urnov, who is here as a Fulbright scholar for the entire school year. In the spring, CITD will host a professional conference at the university.

Yet the plays, of course, are designed to live in performance. We’re delighted to have you join us for tonight’s presentation of Yury Klavdiev’s *The Polar Truth*. We hope to share some insights into the experiences of our contemporaries in Russia that will make you curious to learn more about them. The notes in this program, our website and our post show discussions may help to start you on that journey. There’s much to discover . . .

Robyn Quick

Associate Professor, Department of Theatre Arts
Russia Season Dramaturg

The New Russian Drama Season 2009–2010

Towson University's Department of Theatre Arts will present an entire season of contemporary Russian drama in 09–10, developed in collaboration with The Center for International Theatre Development, Philip Arnoult, director.

Main Stage Productions

Tanya-Tanya

By Olga Mukhina

Adapted by Kate Moira Ryan

Directed by Yury Urnov

In the Studio Theatre

December 4th and 5th at 8:00 pm

December 6th at 2:00 pm

December 9th and 10th at 7:30pm

December 11th and 12th at 8:00 pm

Martial Arts

By Yury Klavdiev

Translated by David M. White

with Yury Urnov

Directed by Yury Urnov

and Stephen Nunns

In the Marder Theatre

April 21st and 22nd at 7:30pm

April 23rd at 8:00 pm

April 24th at 2:00 pm and 8:00 pm

April 25th at 2:00 pm

April 26th and 27th at 7:30pm

Frozen in Time

By Vyacheslav Durmenkov

Translated by John Freedman

Directed by Peter Wray

In the Main Stage Theatre

April 30th at 8:00 pm

May 1st at 8:00 pm

May 2nd at 2:00 pm

May 5th and 6th at 7:30pm

May 7th and 8th at 8:00 pm

Workshop Productions

Vodka, F*ing, and Television**

By Maksym Kurochkin

Translated by John Hanlon

Directed by Stephen Nunns

In the Dreyer MFA Studio

October 21st and 22nd at 7:30pm

October 23rd and 24th at 8:00pm

The Polar Truth

By Yury Klavdiev

Translated by John Freedman

Directed by Joseph Ritsch

In the Marder Theatre

November 12th at 7:30pm

November 13th and 14th at 8:00 pm

The Schooling of Bento Bonchev

By Maksym Kurochkin

Translated by John Freedman

Directed by Yury Urnov

In the Dreyer MFA Studio

February 3rd and 4th at 7:30pm

February 5th and 6th at 8:00 pm

Staged Reading

Playing Dead

By The Presnyakov Brothers

Translated by Juanita Rockwell

with Yury Urnov Directed by Yury Urnov

In the Main Stage Theatre

November 16th at 7:30pm

Associated Productions

I Am the Machine Gunner

By Yury Klavdiev

Translated by John Freedman

Produced by Generous Company

At Towson University

Friday, December 4th at 6pm

Saturday, December 5th at 3pm

Sunday, December 6th at 1pm

Playing Dead

By the Presnyakov Brothers

Translated by Juanita Rockwell

with Yury Urnov Produced by Single Carrot Theatre

February 17th – March 14th

Reading of Tanya-Tanya

By Olga Mukhina

Adapted by Kate Moira Ryan

Directed by Yury Urnov

Produced by New York Theatre Workshop

October 8th

From The Director of The Polar Truth

Upon embarking on my initial research for this production of *The Polar Truth*, I discovered that not a single tree grows in the city limits of Norilsk. In fact, not a single tree grows in a thirty mile radius of Norilsk. The permanent frozen ground and the drastic levels of pollution challenge life on a daily basis. Not only does this environment challenge the growth of trees, but the very existence of all living things in this arctic city.

And yet, we find a group of young people, not only dealing with frozen ground, and toxic air, but HIV/AIDS. And their illness brings much more than daily regimens of medication and a constant struggle to remain healthy. It brings them a rejection from society, the loss of their friends, families and even their homes. And yet, in the midst of such dire circumstances, they come together to create a community of their own. We find ourselves witnessing a community that takes their desperate situations and turns them into a common ground which provides the strength to survive. They are the fledgling trees that dare to break through the frozen dirt to reach for the sun, fighting against their environment to find life when everyone and everything tells them they cannot.

Since arriving as an MFA candidate in the theatre department at Towson, I have been very invested in exploring connections between the graduate and undergraduate programs. So I approached the department chair with the hopes of working on a production, as a director, with an undergraduate cast. Even though I had chosen another play, Robyn Quick kindly asked me to look at the script of *The Polar Truth* as a possible option. Well, as soon as I finished the first read of the play I knew I had found just the right piece for a collaboration between the programs.

I hope that you will find that we too, the graduate and undergraduate communities, have come together to create a very important evening of theater. These young actors have certainly made me a better director, and I hope that I have helped to make them better actors. We did indeed build a bridge and have learned a great deal from each other's strengths and challenges.

Each and every one of these actors has attacked this play with passion, courage and an emotional commitment that you would expect of any theatre professional. They have brought their joy and sadness, their imagination and beauty to create a world that is both devastating and hopeful. They have taken on the challenge of this puzzle called *The Polar Truth* and have given it a voice which is truly their own. And I deeply believe that tonight you will witness twelve young saplings that for sure will grow into powerful trees rooted in great artistry and genuine humanity.

I would like to thank Jay Herzog and Stephen Nunn for making this project possible. To Robyn Quick who not only gave me the gift of this play, but also her unwavering support and mentorship. To my stage manager and team of designers, who brought their dedication, passion, and creativity making them an incomparable part of this ensemble. And to all the staff and faculty of the department who have contributed so generously in making this production everything that it has grown to be.

Joseph Ritsch

MFA Candidate in Theatre

A Conversation with the Translator

David Gregory speaks with John Freedman about the translation of *The Polar Truth*. Gregory, a third-year MFA Theatre student, is working to create the first English translation of *Los Engranajes* (The Gears) by contemporary Spanish playwright Raul Hernandez Garrido. Also Gregory's thesis project, the play premieres in the U.S. at Towson University in February 2010.

John Freedman, theater critic of The Moscow Times, has published nine books on Russian theater. His play translations have been performed in the United States, Australia and Canada. He is the Russia director of The New Russian Drama: Translation / Production/Conference.

DG: What was it about this particular play that led you to devote your time and passion to its translation?

JF: I often come to the plays I translate through productions of them. If I see that a play works well on stage, and I can imagine it would work in other ways in other circumstances, it is likely to grab my attention. That happened when I saw Georg Genoux's production of *The Polar Truth* in Moscow at Teatr.doc. It struck me as a marvelous chameleon of a play that could be done in vastly different ways. I must add that, by the time I saw this play, I was already a big fan of Klavdiev's and I was dying to take a shot at putting him into English.

DG: How did you approach the translation process for *The Polar Truth*? Did you work with the actors or director of a particular production of this play? If so, how did that affect the final translation?

JF: I did this one as I have done most of my translations up to now. I found a play and writer that I loved and wanted to share with people in the United States, and so I went to work on it. In other words, I had no idea where this play might go, whose hands it might end up in. I just knew this writer needed to be known in the U.S. and I was determined to do something about that. When the Towson/CITD New Russian Drama program began picking up speed, it was natural that I would include this play among the many I was having people read at Towson. Actually, Daniel Ettinger was the first person I sent it to and he was quite supportive. I gave it to others, Robyn Quick included, and through Robyn the play ended up on course syllabi and found its way into the hands of Joseph Ritsch. Joseph saw something that spoke to him in the play and he chose to direct it. There you have it. That's how it worked with this particular play.

Before rehearsals began, Joseph and I discussed the play, the translation, the writer and the context during one of my short residencies at Towson. I have not discussed the translation with the actors or Joseph since he entered rehearsals. None of them have sent me any questions, so I can only assume and hope that they found the translation to be clear and effective.

DG: How did your collaborative relationship with Yury Klavdiev surface? How much freedom does he and other playwrights give you in the translation process?

JF: A brief chronology of my relationship with Klavdiev would be this. In early 2006 I saw three productions of his plays in Moscow and was mightily impressed. That same summer I attended a playwriting festival in Togliatti, Yury's hometown, where Yury staged and read an early version of his extraordinary play *The Slow Sword*. It was a revelation with its references to Japanese anime, Tarantino films, Russian violence and thuggery, Russian sentimentality and Russian ethics. I introduced myself to Yury and did an informal interview with him for *The Moscow Times*. I ended up writing a couple of articles about him based on that fascinating chat. The following year, when I saw the production of *The Polar Truth*, I realized I wanted to take this "relationship" further.

Yury is a fabulous "collaborator." I did with his work what I always do: I translated the text quickly, stopping for nothing, rushing over what I didn't know or understand, and just getting a text down. What I do is flag everything I have questions about as I race through the translation, seeking in the first draft to capture the energy, the velocity, the ebb and flow of the work as a whole. My first drafts always contain more asterisks than words. Essentially, they are a collection of questions. I then go back and comb the sloppy new English text more carefully, checking it against the original. I do this several times until I am left with those problems I simply cannot solve with my own limited knowledge. This is when I approach the writer with specifics. Many such questions are often stupid. But the translator **MUST** know what he or she is doing. So if the question is stupid, I ask the writer's forgiveness, and I honestly pose stupid questions. I sent a ream of questions to Yury and he got back to me within a day. He provided clear, concise, explanations of everything. His command of his play, of what he wanted to say, of what might remain hidden in the text but needed expression, was striking. I had known before that he was a meticulous writer, but it was only at this point that I realized the full extent of his meticulousness.

DG: Do you have a specific style of writing you like to incorporate into all your translations and how do you determine what style is best for the piece?

JF: I suspect every translator does, indeed, have his or her own style. That is probably inevitable. We all have our own DNA, after all. However, our job as translators is not to express our own style, but that of the original author. One of the things you must do – to the fullest extent it is possible – is to, shall we say, "dissolve" into the original author's style. I think that is a more precise image than "blending." You really want to become one with the vision, the mannerisms, the outlook, the temperament of the author. I have translated very different writers – Olga Mukhina, Nikolai Erdman, Yury Klavdiev and Maksym Kurochkin come to mind immediately. These are four different planets – four different universes, actually. It's not for me to say how successful I have been working with them. But I know that I feel almost

physiological changes coming over me as I work on their texts. I feel myself becoming informed by these dramatic worlds, becoming more tender, more caustic, less tolerant, more acerbic than I really am. This is one of the reasons, incidentally, that I try to get a first draft down as quickly as possible. It is not easy to go in and out of another person's mind and sensibility. I throw myself in, let myself drown in the vat of Mukhina's or Klavdiev's worlds, and work feverishly to get some sort of a whole before returning to my own reality.

DG: What are your goals in a translation and how do you gauge the success of a translation of such as *The Polar Truth*?

JF: I guess my goal is to bring out American qualities – things that Americans can identify with easily – without eclipsing the original Russian qualities. It is a hard thing to do, but the ultimate goal is to make an American audience aware of a foreign experience while also recognizing much in the work that is familiar.

DG: For our translators out there, what piece of advice can you give when embarking on a translation of their own?

JF: All I have to offer are paradoxes.

Sometimes the best way to render a text faithfully is to violate it in some way. A perfect example is humor, one of the least translatable elements of any culture. I often do not try to create a joke or pun in the same place where one exists in the original. As I "lose" an author's pun in one place, I know that a similar opportunity will arise in the English soon. I allow the structure of English – and I mean both the language itself and the structure of the way we formulate thoughts in English – to determine where the humor will make a natural, organic appearance.

But probably the biggest, most daunting piece of advice I can offer is this: A translator must not only know two languages, two cultures, two traditions and two histories, but he or she must also know what he or she does not know.

Let that sink in a minute.

You must know what you do not know. You must recognize the outer limits of your own personal knowledge. You must sense when a phrase or scene implies more than what it actually communicates on the surface. These are the moments when you go to the author and say, "I know what you're saying, but I don't think I get everything you are implying." It is a virtually impossible, but nonetheless crucial, task. The point is this; you must always doubt everything you write, even as you blindly trust your instincts. You must know that there are cultural allusions, literary quotes, personal quirks and political references lurking under the simplest of phrases. If you miss out on these, you are missing out on the whole drama of the play.

About the Playwright

People everywhere are the same. We want the same things. We want to understand why the things we want are not happening and what we can do to make them happen.

Yury Klavdiev.

Yury Klavdiev was born in 1975 in Togliatti, a major center for automobile manufacturing in Russia. Although his grandfather organized the first theatre in Togliatti, Klavdiev himself felt little connection to this art form. He found acting difficult to believe and the aristocratic characters portrayed on stage seemed unconnected to his life. Instead, he spent his youth with the street gangs of Togliatti, while he secretly composed poetry at home. In 2002, however, he attended a production of Ivan Vyrypaev's *Oxygen* when a traveling version of Moscow's New Drama Festival visited Togliatti. The experience of seeing recognizable characters and subjects convinced him to start writing plays.

In his plays, Klavdiev seeks to capture the real lives of those outside of privileged spheres in Russian society. His characters, who are often homeless or involved in criminal activity, both endure and inflict emotional and physical violence. They struggle for survival and attempt to understand their fate in a harsh world that mirrors what Klavdiev sees in his society. Children and teenagers hold a special place in Klavdiev's imagination and he often depicts young characters caught up in a world that forces maturity on them too soon. At the same time, he believes that his plays are written in between the real and ideal worlds. His characters express both despair at the way they see the world in the here and now as well as hope for the way they would like it to be. Critic John Freedman writes that the playwright "examines volatile loners and outsiders who precariously, though nimbly, maneuver on tight wires stretched between the poles of violence and tenderness" (85).

Klavdiev's plays include *I Am the Machine Gunner*, *Martial Arts*, *The Bullet Collector*, *The Slow Sword* and *The Polar Truth*. He and his wife, Anastasia Moskalenko, wrote the children's play, *Piggy and Carp: A M-m-m-Monstrous Vegetarian Drama*. Productions of his plays have toured and been produced throughout Russia and Europe. Three Klavdiev projects in our New Russian Drama season mark the writer's debut in North America.



Works Cited

Freedman, John. "Maksym Kurochkin: A Writer for Paradoxical Times." *TheatreForum* 32 (2008): 85 – 87. International Index to the Performing Arts. Web. 8 Oct. 2009

Norilsk

Everyone around here, we're all orphans of the Gulag.

Aleksandr, an 80 year old man who was sent to the Norilsk Gulag for the crime of being a Ukrainian peasant.

Imagine a city so remote that there are no roads leading to it. The only way to get in and out is by a ferry or airplane (Meier 204). Think of a cold and polluted place where there are no trees growing within 30 miles of the city. Welcome to Norilsk. This city was literally built on the bones of the prisoners who perished in its construction (Meier 163). To this day, any time there is a construction project, the laborers will still find large quantities of bones (Meier 210). These characteristics may not attract many visitors to the city. As of 2001, the government made such visits even more unlikely by reinstating the ban on any tourism into the city. In the Soviet era, Norilsk's "closed-city" status was considered a security issue. The mineral riches of the city made it an ideal location for the development of military and industrial technologies (Meier 204). Recent authorities have declined to comment upon closing the city to outsiders again.

Norilsk, the northernmost city in Siberia, is a harsh place to survive. Winter brings temperatures of 50 degrees below zero and 23 hours of darkness in the middle of December. With its unforgiving climate and isolation, it seems to be the perfect setting for Yury Klavdiev's portrait of homeless youth living with HIV in *The Polar Truth*. The subject matter of the play matches the barren and merciless landscape perfectly. The city was founded as a prison camp in order to mine the land's rich natural resources. The place where undesirables, mainly criminals of the State have been sent for hundreds of years, Norilsk originated as one of the first Gulags in Russia. At its peak, the Gulag contained over 100,000 prisoners (Meier 207). After the death of Stalin in 1953, rioting, strikes, and a lack of true authority plagued the prison. After their release from the Gulag, prisoners were unable to obtain the *Propiska*, or residency permit, required for them to return home. Thus, former prisoners formed the major population of Norilsk. The characters of *The Polar Truth* may very well be the grandchildren of these early inhabitants.

Mining is still the biggest industry in Norilsk. The company Norilsk Nickel was first founded in 1930 as a state enterprise under Stalin. Today "Norilsk Nickel is the world's largest producer of nickel and palladium" as well as one of the leading producers of platinum and several other metals (Norilsk Nickel.org). The lack of government regulation has led to one of the world's worst environmental situations. Rampant air pollution has helped to prevent the growth of vegetation. Birth defects and ill health among children in the town has similarly been blamed on pollution from the factories and mining operations (Galpin). The average male life expectancy is also lower in Norilsk than in other Russian

cities. While the average male life expectancy in Russian is already considered low, at about fifty-seven years, none of the workingmen in Norilsk can expect to live much beyond fifty years (Meier 200).

The buildings within Norilsk are in a constant state of disrepair. The extreme climate and permafrost leads to cracks in all of the sidewalks and buildings. Permafrost damage can actually cause certain parts of buildings to lift off of the ground and create caverns between the buildings and the frozen earth. In these "caverns" one would find needles, condoms, garbage, and probably homeless people. The unforgiving climate, environmental degradation, and arduous history of Norilsk make it a rather remarkable and unique place. Yet, for the inhabitants of Norilsk, as for the characters of *The Polar Truth*, it also serves as a familiar background for the ordinary struggles of everyday life

Works Cited

Meier, Andrew. *Black Earth: A Journey Through Russia After the Fall*. New York: Norton, 2003. Print.

Galpin, Richard. "Toxic Truth of Secretive Siberian City." 5 April 2007. BBC News, Web. 9 September 2009.

Norilsk Nickel. "About Norilsk Nickel." 2008. Web. 27 Oct. 2009.

By **April Baldwin**

Senior, Political Science

Homelessness in Contemporary Russia

Buried to their knees in daily cares, sunk to their torsos in problems, buried to their necks in poverty.

From *The Polar Truth*

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, there has been a drastic increase in the visibility of homeless people living in Russia. The collapse of the Soviet Union created immense economic instability throughout all of the regions that were once joined under the same political banner. Before the collapse, 14 million people in the Soviet Union lived at the poverty level. Afterwards, the number skyrocketed to 168 million people in these regions (Lane 98). As a result of this poverty, homelessness increased to levels that had not been seen since World War I and World War II (Stoecker 4). For decades the Russian government attempted to conceal the “vagrant” populations that inhabited its major cities by sending such people to faraway regions, including Siberia. In *The Polar Truth*, Yury Klavdiev makes the attempt to reveal something of the struggles faced by these people whose experiences the government tried to conceal.

Homelessness is defined as “the condition (position) of a person with no living quarters belonging to him through right of ownership or right of use on the basis of a lodging (rental) agreement, and forced as a result to lead a lifestyle which may differ from a generally accepted ‘domestic’ lifestyle” (Interregional Study 2007 11). One of the biggest causes of homelessness in present-day Russia stems from a policy dating back to Stalin’s era in the Soviet Union. Every Soviet citizen was required to have a *propiska*, or residence permit, in order to gain housing within a particular city or region (Hojdestrand 1). This document is the defining difference of Russian homelessness as compared to homelessness in other countries (Interregional Study 2007 11). This policy created a large number of homeless people because anyone who could not obtain a *propiska* could not work or gain access to housing in the major cities. The *propiska* allowed the Soviet government to rid its cities and large towns of people deemed “undesirable.” Anyone who was politically dissident, homeless, or considered to be a criminal was sent out of the cities (Hojdestrand 2).

Today there are some homeless shelters, but this has only been a recent development. For example, in 2001 a “Doctors without Borders” spokesperson delivered a speech to the Russian Duma explaining the plight of homeless individuals in the region. It was only at this time that “the Duma finally voted to create municipal health and social centers for the homeless in Moscow” (doctorswithoutborders.org). The Russian capital has only recently allocated funding for the homeless, and that monetary assistance has yet to reach a place as isolated as Norilsk, Siberia. In *The Polar Truth* there is no mention

of any shelters -- the characters have to create one on their own. Ironically, the few shelters that do exist in Russia require a *propiska* for admittance. "The shelters are run by the local districts, the "raiony," and are targeted only at people who formally lived in the respective district (Hojdestrand 6)." Residents of other districts and those without a propiska may not use the shelters. Even though the propiska can no longer banish people from the cities, it has created an entire culture of street people. *The Polar Truth* offers a glimpse into that culture and into the lives of people who for a very long time were virtually unseen and unheard.

Works Cited

- Hojdestrand, Tova. "The Soviet-Russian Production of Homelssness: Propiska, Housing, Privatisation." Department of Social Anthropology, University of Stockolm. 2003. Web.
- Lane, David. "The Economic Legacy: what Putin had to deal with and the way forward." Russian Politics Under Putin. Ed Cameron Ross. New York: Manchester University Press, 2004. 95-113.
- Stoecker, Sally W. "Homelessness and Criminal Exploitation of Russian Minors: Realities, resources, and Legal Remedies." Demokratizatsiva. Spring (2001). Web.
- Interregional Study. "Social and Legal Aspects of the Problem of Homelessness in Russia." Saint Petersburg, 2007. 1-70. Web.

April Baldwin

Senior, Political Science

The Gospel According to Tapeworm: Religion in The Polar Truth

In *The Polar Truth*, Yury Klavdiev depicts a cold, harsh world for anyone who is infected with HIV. Not only friends, family, and officials such as the police reject those who are infected by the incurable disease, but also members of religions like the Jehovah's Witnesses. The beliefs of the Jehovah's Witnesses prohibit them from treating anyone infected with any disease by means of a blood transfusion. According to *Watchtower: Official Website of Jehovah's Witnesses*: "Those who respect life as a gift from the Creator do not try to sustain life by taking in blood" ("How Can Blood Save Your Life?"). The playwright attributes similar attitudes to the Jehovah's Witnesses parents of Tapeworm, an HIV positive character in *The Polar Truth*. In a stage direction, he writes of the character's experience: "For Jehovah's Witnesses blood is something of a fetish. When his parents found out he was HIV-positive they gave him his own tin pan and spoon. They didn't give him any forks or knives . . . They said, 'Screw you going out infecting normal people'" (Klavdiev 15). Tapeworm's parents want his blood to remain inside his body and they don't want any other blood entering his body. The sentiment implied by the author is fear; fear of infecting others and a lack of hope for curing those who are infected. Because of this fear, the characters in the play must come together to create their own moral code and spiritual belief system in order to find happiness in a world that has rejected them.

Throughout the twentieth century, Russians struggled to find a balance between specific spiritual communities and the larger social and political structure of the country. For centuries, the Russia Orthodox Church had served as the dominant religion of the country's leaders and most of its people. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the church had an estimated 100 million members, making it the world's largest national church at the time (Kazvin 318-19). At the birth of the Soviet Union, however, the Bolsheviks seized control of the state. Because of their Marxist views, they "disestablished the church in January 1918" (Kazmina 319-20). The Bolsheviks' ideals include the belief that religion is "the opiate of the masses" and they held the view that allowing any religious faith in the Soviet Union would be mirroring the old regime under the tsars. However, Christian ideals were deeply rooted in Russian culture dating back to the Byzantine Empire. As a result of this conflict, throughout the Soviet era, the relationship between church and state took several different forms, with the government frequently revising its sense of how the church must be controlled or utilized to serve the Soviet mission.

Due to Gorbachev's reforms at the end of the 1980s, this relationship shifted dramatically. When the Soviet regime fell, the people of Russia were able to practice a variety of religions. In this new environment of free choice, Russians in the 1990s began searching for God through a wide range of faiths, including Christianity and "omnibeliefs." These "omnibeliefs" suggest that Christians might also believe in such things as: poltergeists, interplanetary aliens, reincarnation, and occult phenomena (Kazmina 334). Today, other religious orders such as the Jehovah's Witnesses regularly send missionaries to help spread their faith to Russia (Kazmina 342). In recent years, however, the struggle for

balance again has shifted toward greater solidarity between the state and the Russian Orthodox Church (Kazmina 339). Minority faiths, such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, must register with the state and conform to strict regulations. In 2004, prosecutors in Moscow charged the group with "stirring up religious strife, dividing families, infringing on individual rights and freedoms [and] encouraging suicide by enjoining members to refuse medical assistance" (Weir 6). The court ruling to close the Jehovah's Witnesses in Moscow caused members of other religious groups outside the country's dominant faith to worry about their future in the country (Weir 6).

Clearly, the struggle to define the place of religious worship in the Russian state continues day-to-day. However no place exists in that battle for those with HIV. Yury Klavdiev's dramatic world takes a firm stance against those in both religious and secular communities who would reject people with the illness. But at the same time he offers the victims, and by extension, his audience, an alternate vision of life through the spiritual community his characters create. Tapeworm provides words of wisdom when asked by Kid if it is possible to be like Jesus. He replies, "The main thing is to not fuck up. God does not fuck up. We kill and screw everything up. That is why, and only that is why: He is God and we are people . . . It's just easier for us. We only have 15 or 20 years of life left. We won't even get tired of being good" (Klavdiev 23).

Works Cited

- "How Can Blood Save Your Life?" *Watchtower: Official Website of Jehovah's Witnesses*. 1990. Web. 28 Oct. 2009.
- Kazmina, Olga. "Religion." *Understanding Contemporary Russia*. Ed. Michael L. Bressler. Boulder: Lynne Reiner Publishers, 2009. 317-51. Print.
- Weir, Fred. "Moscow Ruling Vexes Religious Minorities." *Christian Science Monitor*. 22 June 2004: 6. LexisNexis Academic. Web. 28 Oct. 2009.

Eric Boelsche

Junior, Department of Theatre Arts

“Let’s Talk about Sex, Baby”: Sexuality and The Polar Truth

In the late 1980s, the policy of glasnost or openness made it possible for Soviet citizens to raise publicly a wide range of social, political and personal subjects, including sex. But despite the appearance of naked bodies in journals and sexually explicit themes in films, the subject of sex was widely considered inappropriate for everyday conversation. That attitude continues today. Even married couples do not always feel comfortable discussing their sex lives (Kon 172). This discomfort certainly extends to any discussion of the sexual habits of teenagers. Despite the lack of conversation on the topic among the general population, however, teenagers in Russia are having sex - probably at this very moment. But without the opportunity for informed discussion, they may approach this very real part of their lives with confusion. The absence of sex education in schools and at home may lead them to rely upon myths and misinformation about sex that they share with their peers.

Russian teens typically receive little information about sex from teachers or parents. In a survey performed in St. Petersburg in 2004, 61% of teenagers reported having “little or no sex education” in school (Kornienko). Parents often feel uncomfortable speaking with their children about sex, and vice versa. These teenagers, then, learn the bulk of what they know about sex from their peers, who probably have little knowledge themselves. This kind of information - or lack thereof - informs their sex lives. Another factor contributing to their knowledge of this basic human function is the proliferation of sexual material on television and the Internet. Someone from any culture who has a computer and Internet access can look for pornography on the Internet, but that person can’t always order prostitutes from the web in the way that Russians can (Aral 2184). There are Internet sites set up specifically for selling sex, and prostitutes can be contacted by way of such sites (Aral 2184). Ironically, however, despite this public proliferation of sexual images, discussion of sex itself is still widely considered somewhat taboo. This means that the pictures of topless women and other such suggestive images that started appearing in newspapers in under glasnost remain in the public eye (Goldschmidt 321) without a discussion of the consequences of what could happen when following through on impulses that arise from viewing them. The lack of discussion and safe-sex education for young people may also contribute to the prevalence of HIV and other STDs in Russia, according to a 2004 study of sexually transmitted disease in that country (Kornienko). Certainly the characters in *The Polar Truth* make no mention of the safe sex practices that tend to be part of any sex education program.

The characters in this play navigate this maze of misinformation in their efforts to consider both the ethics and the pleasures of sexual activity. Their debates about “jerk off” vs. “fucking” and advice concerning how to find an enjoyable sexual partner might be heard among teenagers in any part of the world. But in the environment of this play and in a society that seldom engages young people in meaningful conversations about sex with their more knowledgeable elders, such conversations represent one more way that the young people of *The Polar Truth* are left to construct their own society.

Works Cited

Aral, Sevgi O., Janet S. St. Lawrence, Roman Dyatlov, and Andrei Kozlov. “Commercial Sex Work, Drug Use, and Sexually Transmitted Infections in St. Petersburg, Russia”. *Social Science and Medicine*. 60 (2005): 2181-2190. *Academic Search Premier*. Web. 15 Apr 2009.

Goldschmidt, Paul W. “Pornography in Russia”. *Consuming Russia: Popular Culture, Sex, and Society since Gorbachev*. Adele Marie Barker, ed. London: Duke University Press, 1999. Print.

Kon, Igor. *The Sexual Revolution in Russia*. Trans. James Riordan. New York: The Free Press, 1995. Print.

Kornienko, Sophia. “Infections Linked to a Lack of Sex Ed.” *The Moscow Times*. 28 Apr. 2004. *Lexis Nexis*. Web. 10 Oct. 2009.

Abby Grimsley

Senior, Department of Theatre Arts

Drugs in The Polar Truth

*Russians like to use drugs intravenously; it is culturally accepted.
We do not like pills or smoking; we Russians go for the real thing.*

(Veeken 138)

In this quote, Russian HIV/AIDS educator Vitalic Melnikov describes some of the distinctive characteristics of the drug users his program targets. Not only does Melnikov highlight the growing trend among drug users toward injectable drugs, but he also notes that such drug users are often difficult to distinguish from the general young population. Those who inject drugs may also hold jobs, go to school and socialize with their peers who do not regularly use drugs. But what is it really like to do drugs in Russia and how is it connected to *The Polar Truth*? Answering this question requires finding out what kinds of drugs Russians use and in what ways they use them.

There are a few different types of popular drugs in Russia, each with its accompanying dangers. The four types of popular injectable drugs in Russia include heroin, “chornie” (translated to “black”), “vint” (translated to “screw”), and ketamine (Reilley 318). Heroin is the most expensive to buy, at the equivalent of 150 U.S. dollars per gram, while chornie is the least expensive, only about two U.S. dollars per dose (Reilley 318). Ketamine is cheaper than heroin - around ten U.S. dollars for ten CCs - but users also must inject it more frequently, as the high it gives lasts only about thirty minutes (Reilley 318). Both vint and chornie can be manufactured from home, which is cheaper than buying the drugs, but is also considerably more dangerous, given the high risk for incorrectly mixing chemicals (Reilley 318). Preparing chornie presents additional risks because occasionally blood is added to the mix in order to soften it (Reilley 318). If the person making the chornie is HIV positive, his or her infection can spread to the users who inject that batch of drugs. In *The Polar Truth*, the characters would most likely use homemade drugs because of their limited economic means. This kind of use makes them self-sufficient in that they don’t need to rely on a dealer for their drugs, but it also requires skill in making the drugs so they do not end up accidentally making something that will kill them.

Drugs are also connected with being social and hanging out with friends, especially among Russian youth. Teenagers sometimes refer to drug use as “relaxing,” which connotes a leisure activity rather than an uncontrollable habit (Pilkington 39). There are often other elements of relaxation involved in drug use, such as watching television or eating junk food (Pilkington 40). Even though young people do not necessarily consider drug use to be a bad thing, they do think it is something they need to watch carefully and regulate (Pilkington 33). Some social circles have even designed certain rules for “safe” drug use, such as controlling the frequency of use, not exceeding a certain dose, and knowing that

the drug is “pure” and hasn’t been mixed with any other drugs (Pilkington 33-4). As long as they follow these designated rules, these teenagers feel that they are being smart and safe with their drug use and therefore have no qualms about injecting (Pilkington 34). The characters in *The Polar Truth* inhabit a similar world of drug use. Drugs provide a common cultural reference point and even a bonding activity. Characters feel they have a handle on the rules of safe use, and yet the dangers – of HIV infection, of deadly concoctions and of violence at the hands of users and dealers – help to define the harsh reality of their world.

Works Cited

- Pilkington, Hilary. “‘For Us It Is Normal’: Exploring the ‘Recreational’ Use of Heroin in Russian Youth Cultural Practice”. *Journal of Communist Studies and Transitional Politics*. 22.1 (2006): 24-53. Academic Search Premier. Web. 23 Mar. 2009.
- Reilley, Brigg, Dave Burrows, Vitalec Melnikov, Tatiana Andreeva, Murdo Bijl, and Hans Veeken. “Injecting Drug Use and HIV in Moscow: Results of a Survey”. *Journal of Drug Issues*. 30.2 (2000): 305-322. Academic Search Premier. Web. 15 Apr. 2009.
- Veeken, Hans. “Russia: Sex, Drugs and AIDS and MSF.” *British Medical Journal*. 138.2 (1998): 138-40. *Health Reference Center Academic*. Web. 15 Apr. 2009.

Abby Grimsley

Senior, Theatre Arts

HIV Epidemic in Russia

The truth is HIV. Because HIV shows what a person's worth. In real terms. Ask yourself what you'd do if you were going to die in ten years. Your answer to that question will show how much truth you have in you.

Tapeworm

Russia's HIV population is among the largest in the world, with close to one million people infected as of 2007 (CIA); it's also one of the most ignored. Due to the lack of knowledge surrounding this topic in Russia, HIV and AIDS are not commonly understood, but rather feared as are the people who have the disease. If the disease is not addressed by the Russian government and if accurate steps are not taken to suppress the spread of HIV, Russia's future looks bleak. According to scholar Timothy Heleniak, "the disease has the potential to be crippling for Russia, demographically, socially, and economically" (235).

HIV, the human immunodeficiency virus, is the underlying primary cause of AIDS, acquired immune deficiency syndrome. AIDS causes the human immune system to weaken progressively and allows other viruses and diseases to infect the human body. HIV appeared fairly recently in Russia, with the first case being diagnosed in 1987. However, the rate of infection since 1996 has grown exponentially, in part due to unprotected sexual encounters and intravenous drug use that has increased dramatically since the fall of the Soviet Union. The prevalence of these activities in prison makes the incarcerated population particularly vulnerable to the disease.

A main form of transmission of HIV is through sexual contact. Heterosexual or homosexual contact between the Russian people and foreigners is believed to be the initial transmission of the virus (Heleniak 236). The country has also seen a dramatic increase in the number of sex workers in recent years. In 2003, Moscow was reported to have about 13,000 to 30,000 prostitutes and St. Petersburg estimated that their population was about 8,000. Sex workers are at high risk both to contract the disease and to help spread it to other populations. The drug culture in Russia has contributed to the transmission of HIV as well. During the 1990s, the number of intravenous drug users in Russia grew drastically, as did their rate of HIV infection. By 1996, over 66 percent of the cases of HIV were attributed to the sharing of needles and other drug paraphernalia (Heleniak 236). What researchers have seen in Russia's HIV population is that a large percentage of those with HIV are young, because most of the population of drug users is young. 78% of that population consists of young males between the ages of 20 and 30. With the drug

culture being a huge aspect of young people's lives in Russia, health workers worry that infection among drug users will continue to spread throughout the population in increasing numbers. Prison culture has been another contributing factor in the spread of HIV in Russia. Transmission in the prison system is generally through unprotected sex and drug use among prisoners. The Russian prison system serves as an incubator for the spread of HIV as well as other infectious diseases and serves as a vehicle for spreading HIV to the general population when inmates are released.

The Polar Truth examines many of these activities and populations in the form of individual human beings inflicted with the disease. It also depicts the social, economic and emotional effects on those individuals when the larger community cannot find a place for them and their illness. In both ways it seeks to tell the truth of HIV in Russia.

The Russian Federation is on the verge of an HIV epidemic that will be very difficult to contain.

Peter Piot, executive director of UNAIDS, Nov. 2000

Works Cited

CIA. "Russia: People." *The World Factbook*. Web. 9 Oct. 2009.

Heleniak, Timothy. "Population, Health and Migration." *Understanding Contemporary Russia*. Ed. Michael L. Bressler. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2009. Print.

Popova, N.V. "College Students' Attitudes Toward People Infected with HIV." *Ebscohost*. 2007. Web. 19 April 2009.

"Russia's Aids catastrophe growing." BBC NEWS | *News Front Page*. Web. 20 Oct. 2009.

Tedstorm, John E. On the Frontline of an Epidemic: *The Need for Urgency in Russia's Fight Against AIDS*. CIAO 2003. Web. 19 Apr. 2009

Theodore, Gerber P., and Sarah E. Mendelson. "Crisis Among Crises Among Crises." *Ebscohost*. 2005. Web. 23 Oct. 2009

Lauren Guy

Junior, Theatre Arts

The Drama of the New Russia

Russia in the first decade of the century has done little to change the world's perception that it is a riddle wrapped in a mystery.

After a period of comparative irrelevance in the 1990s, Russia once again is a major player in international politics. Its leadership and influence is felt in virtually every key issue facing the global community. It is a nation whose leaders have learned to talk "democracy and freedom" as skillfully as any.

This all happened, meanwhile, as Russian authorities closed down independent news outlets; looked the other way when prominent "dissenting" journalists and politicians were murdered; provided tacit support to nationalist thugs; and found ways to jail or silence business leaders and social activists who dared to disagree with government policy.

Will the real Russia please stand up?

In fact, one generation of Russians – or, more precisely, a group of playwrights from that generation – has already stepped forward. These individuals were teenagers or pre-teens when Mikhail Gorbachev sought to reform the Communist Party, and entered their 20s while Boris Yeltsin led Russia through awkward battles with poverty, corruption and infrastructural collapse. They attained personal and professional maturity in their 30s as Vladimir Putin established social stability and presided over the onset of affluence and a contingent spiritual stagnation. They continue to create as Dmitry Medvedev leads Russia through the global financial crisis and struggles with hidden dilemmas left over from all the previous eras put together.

These writers, of which we selected five to participate in the New Russian Drama: Voices in a Shifting Age project, were instrumental in raising the status of Russian drama to heights unheard of for decades. Each of their compelling voices stands alone, and their visions are unique. They are not members of any club or movement, but taken together, they offer striking examples of a nation struggling – often clumsily, often cruelly, but always sincerely – to renew itself. Moreover, they represent the diversity of contemporary Russian drama not only in style, but in geography and background.

Olga Mukhina grew up in Russia's Far North in a family of geologists but reflects Moscow's ultra urban sensibility. Vyacheslav Durnenkov and Yury Klavdiev grew up in working neighborhoods in the tough southern city of Togliatti, occasionally known as the "Russian Detroit." Klavdiev, incidentally, has relocated to St. Petersburg and is arguably now that cosmopolitan city's most progressive playwright. The Presnyakov brothers, both of them university professors, hail from Yekaterinburg in the Ural Mountains region, a genuine hotbed for gritty new dramatists. Maksym Kurochkin, educated as an ethnologist and historian, was born and grew up in Kiev, Ukraine.

All have been translated into the major languages of the world and produced throughout Europe and the New World.

Russian writers are not as overtly political as some of their counterparts in the United States, but that does not mean they avoid issues of political and social significance. On the contrary, Klavdiev, Durnenkov and the Presnyakovs all deal in one way or another with the corrosion and breakdown of social norms, a painful process that inevitably leads to confusion, chaos and violence. The plays of Kurochkin and Mukhina, in vastly divergent ways, reflect the paralysis that plagues cultured people as the world changes and tosses ever new challenges at them.

Anyone wanting to know where Russia stands today and where it might head in the future would be well advised to take note of what these and other Russian playwrights are saying. We live in an age when Russian newspapers and television are telling only part of their nation's story. In the arts, poets and prose writers have slipped into the background. The film industry has been in a state of flux and crisis for over two decades.

Not surprisingly, theater and drama have emerged as the most vital and responsive media of social discourse and communication. Thanks to Mukhina, Klavdiev, Durnenkov, Kurochkin and the Presnyakovs, the mystery that is Russia has become a little less enigmatic.

John Freedman

Theater Critic, The Moscow Times

Translating Russia for America

I once met a man who could not understand why anyone would need more than one translation of *War and Peace*. "It's just words transposed into English," he said incredulously. "Once it's done it's done."

It is probable that everyone reading these notes – written, after all, for a university-based project in a prestigious theater program – recognizes that as a radically uninformed statement. What not everyone may realize, however, is the profound degree to which fuzzy thinking penetrates general opinions about translation. Respected producers and directors have told me, "Oh, we'll clean that clumsy translation up before we go into rehearsals."

I have also heard tell of ancient mariners saying, "We'll just plug that little hole," before heading out to stormy seas.

Translation is an art. In fact, a translator is a director, a playwright, an actor and an audience member all rolled into one. He or she constantly must hear the questions of the actor – "Can I say this?" – even as the spectator in the mind's eye is wondering, "What does this mean?" while the segment of the brain thinking about how to direct this slowly emerging text is pondering what gestures and intonations the chosen words will call into being. All of this while the original author's voice – with its unique rhythms, diction and melodies – must be singing in perfect pitch in the translator's head.

No one in the theater is more sensitive than actors and spectators. It is one of the reasons why we love them so. Metaphorically, each must be invited to embark on a journey lacking hazardous obstacles and treacherous turns *not planted there by the author*. If an actor speaks a word that sticks in his or her craw, it must be because the author willed it, not because the translator was lazy. Every time an audience member is distracted by questions or doubts *not envisioned by the author*, communication has broken down. And the translator is to blame.

A play making the transition from Russian into English is threatened by a myriad of potentially catastrophic misunderstandings. As languages, Russian and English are structured differently, and so provide vastly different cadences, stores of information and electric impulses. That is nothing, however, compared to the pitfalls involved in translating cultural phenomena. Did you know, for example, that the contemporary Russian word for "red" is the same one the language still employs for "beautiful" in fairy tales? "Red Square," in other words, has nothing to do with the place where the Red Army used to

march. That gives the notion of “seeing red” a whole new sensation, doesn’t it?

In other words, much in a translation must be interpreted as well. But it must be done inconspicuously and in a way that is organic to the original text. So, yes, you may add scholarship to the jobs a translator is called upon to do well.

English is another problem. The British have been good at sniffing out new plays in Russia, translating, publishing and staging them. But as George Bernard Shaw said so famously: “England and America are two countries divided by a common language.” Indeed, many British translations done in the last decade look and sound as foreign to us as any Russian, German or French play might.

The New Russian Drama: Voices in a Shifting Age project was established to bring the riches of contemporary Russian drama to America in the American idiom. We believe this is the only way that such major contemporary writers as Olga Mukhina, Maksym Kurochkin, Yuri Klavdiev, Vyacheslav Durnenkov and the Presnyakov brothers can fully be appreciated in the United States.

We also believe there is no one way to create a translation that will allow a play to speak clearly and breathe fully in a new language. As such, we experimented with various methods.

We engaged playwright Kate Moira Ryan to create a new American adaptation of Mukhina’s *Tanya-Tanya*. Playwrights Juanita Rockwell and David M. White worked closely with Russian director Yuri Urnov to fashion American variants of the Presnyakovs’ *Playing Dead* and Klavdiev’s *Martial Arts*, respectively. John Hanlon, with Kurochkin’s *Vodka, F***ing, and Television*, and I, with Durnenkov’s *Frozen in Time*, Kurochkin’s *The Schooling of Bento Bonchev* and Klavdiev’s *The Polar Truth*, took the traditional route of a lone translator rendering an author’s text.

All of us, working with the writers and production teams, endeavored to help five unique Russian voices “speak American” without losing their native flavor, points of view or insights. Each production in this season-long project is confirmation of our belief that American theater will be richer when it embraces what a new generation of Russian playwrights is writing.

John Freedman

Theater Critic, The Moscow Times

Theatre Arts at Towson University

The guiding principle of the Department of Theatre Arts is that its energies and resources remain devoted to the development of its students as creative, cooperative and humanistically educated theatre practitioners and scholars.

The undergraduate program is designed to provide, in cooperation with other departments, a broad liberal education as well as rigorous professional training in which emphasis is placed on skills as well as knowledge. The faculty works with each student to create of an artistic point of view and a professional work ethic appropriate for the theatre, and other endeavors. The department offers the B.A. or B.S. in Theatre with tracks in Acting, Design and Production, and Theatre Studies. The various degree programs and areas of study within the department work cooperatively to give students a rich education in the diverse aspects of theatre as well as focused training that will help them cultivate their individual talents and potential.

The Towson MFA Program in Theatre Arts—now in its 15th year—is unlike any Masters program in the United States in that it trains the total theatre artist/scholar. Every year, a small group is hand-selected to embark on a rigorous three-year journey that nurtures each member's individual artistic vision.

The curriculum is designed for the artist who is not content working within a single discipline: It is for the actor who is also a playwright; the designer who is also playwright; the director who is also a puppeteer; the choreographer who is also a historian.

Students work with faculty and guest artists in a diverse range of disciplines, styles and techniques. In most cases, this informs the students' work, as they create projects both on their own and in collaboration with one another.

The program is open to all forms of experimentation; it is doggedly interdisciplinary; and it is designed for the kind of person who is a self-directed and self-producing artist, trying to work from his or her own aesthetic.

Student Opportunities for Further Study of Russia

Students may combine their interests in Russian theater with their career interests as professional communicators.

Students interested in the behind-the-scenes work of marketing and promoting the fine arts—and other careers in the communications field—may be interested in two new options from Towson University for earning academic credits studying this topic: **global trends affecting professional communicators, with an emphasis on Russia and the USA.**

Independent Study

Work to be completed in January mini-mester or spring 2010 semester . . . for three credits.

No foreign language requirement. Led by TU Prof. Mark McElreath and Adjunct Instructor Gala Duckworth, each student will conduct independent research, write and present a comparative analysis of global trends affecting professional communicators in the student's choice of careers in three countries:

- 1 Russia
- 2 USA
- 3 The country chosen by the student

Why Russia?

Russia is undergoing dramatic changes that significantly affect professional communicators. Both instructors have extensive experience in Russia.

Why USA?

Global standards for best practices in professional communication are being established in the USA, some assert. Students will be expected to gather evidence that supports and contradicts this assertion.

Why a third country of the student's choice?

Student can intellectually go on a trip to any country in the world and think through what it would be like to work there as a professional communicator. Analyzing data from three different countries allows a "triangulation" of insights that may provide a more realistic picture of global trends.

Study Abroad to St. Petersburg, Russia

Early Summer 2010, from May 23rd to June 2nd . . . for three credits.

Open to college students throughout Mid-Atlantic region. Russian educators and communication professionals will lead seminars, guided tours and excursions. Learn global best practices and how to market yourself as a professional communicator anywhere in the world. **Russian language not required: all seminars and guided tours in English.**

Cost: **\$4,750** includes tuition, health insurance, housing, roundtrip airfare, some meals and excursions. **Rolling admission.** Deposit required to secure space.

More information contact Prof. McElreath at mmcelreath@towson.edu; the TU Study Abroad Office at **410-7043-2451**; or go to www.towson.edu/studyabroad.

The New Russian Drama project is a joint project of Towson University Department of Theatre Arts and The Center for International Theatre Development.

CITD support comes from:

The Trust for Mutual Understanding, NY
CEC ARTSLINK, NY
The New Drama Festival, Moscow and St. Petersburg
The Golden Mask Festival, Moscow

Towson University support comes from:

Council for International Exchange of Scholars, a division of the Institute of International Education
The Maryland Humanities Council
The Rosenberg Distinguished Artist Endowment
Towson University Faculty Development Research Committee
The Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas

Center for International Theatre Development (CITD)

Philip Arnout, founder and director

CITD Advisory Board:

Chris Coleman, Portland Center Stage
Jim Nicola, New York Theatre Workshop
Rob Orchard, American Repertory Theatre/Emerson College, Cambridge/Boston
Molly Smith, Arena Stage

New Russian Drama Project Advisory Board:

US:

Mark Bly, Alley Theatre, Dallas
Linda Chapman, New York Theatre Workshop
Kate Loewald, The Play Company, NY
Christian Parker, Atlantic Theatre, NY

Russia:

John Freedman, author, translator, Moscow
Yelena Kovalskaya, critic, Moscow
Oleg Loevsky, Ekaterinburg Young Spectator Theater
Pavel Rudnev, The Meyerhold Center, Moscow
Yuri Urnov, director, Moscow

The photographing or sound recording of any performance without permission from the University is strictly prohibited. Eating and drinking are prohibited in the Theatre. Smoking is prohibited in the Center for the Arts Building. If there is an emergency, please WALK TO THE NEAREST EXIT. The house staff will assist you.

Towson University is in compliance with federal and state regulations regarding nondiscrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, marital status, age, political affiliation, veteran status, disability, or other prohibited reason. The University does not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation. For information, contact the TU Office of Fair Practices, **410-704-2361**.

Towson University is committed to ensuring that persons with disabilities are given an equally effective opportunity to participate in and benefit from the University's programs and services. Individuals with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations are requested to contact the Box Office at **410-704-ARTS** in advance and we will be happy to assist you.

NEW
RUSSIAN
DRAMA
VOICES IN A
SHIFTING AGE
www.newrussiandrama.org

