

# RUSSIAN MAECENAS

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With  
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pages

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is not for Sale p. 10*

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*Fair Government  
Strong Business  
Prosperous Citizens*

RUSSIAN  MAECENAS

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The cruiser *Aurora* returns to its historic moorage after restoration.  
Summer 2016.  
Photo: Svetlana Ragina and Evgeny Sinyaver

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in the *Theme of the Year*  
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a St. Petersburg grant.



Welcome!

## Teacher's Lot

My father was a chemistry teacher at School No. 165 in Leningrad and my mother taught Russian language and literature at School No. 193. Every evening they would hold a kind of teachers' conference at home, exchanging their experiences from that day (I still remember some of their colleagues' surnames) and preparing for the following day. My mother allowed me, as a pre-school child, to 'check' her pupils' exercise books and even to add some hardly noticeable marks in the margins which she would subsequently erase.

It is hard to fathom how I did not become a teacher myself with that background. I was probably put off by the daily grind and by the thought of losing myself in an endless round of textbooks, lecture notes and generations of pupils.

My father's only dream after he retired was to grow onions and carrots in a vegetable garden. He applied to the authorities with a request that he be provided with a summer house as an Exemplary Worker in People's Education in the RSFSR (a title bestowed upon him for his 50 years' service to the school). He received the polite reply that his status was insufficient...

The status of teachers has suddenly become a subject for discussion today, when a great deal has changed



for the better in the world of education and when young people with fresh ideas and fire in their eyes are becoming teachers. 'Piety in relation to teachers? They are just typical products of a conveyor belt system, like everyone else', one TV host expounded. The image of teachers has gradually been diminished — from Sergey Gerasimov's *The Teacher* (1939) starring Boris Chirkov, whose character organizes a school in his village, and the romanticism of *We'll Survive till Monday* to *The Geography Teacher Drank the World Away*, a film about a hopeless loser.

My opinion, as my parents' son, is that the teacher is a key figure in our society. The idea that teachers do not have to earn much because they chose the profession as a vocation seems immoral to me. It is not they who should go into business to supplement their income, but business that should ensure that the best teachers remain in schools and universities (we show examples of such responsible assistance in this issue). And every attempt to diminish the status of teachers in our social state undermines national security in the moral domain.

*Arkady Sosnov,  
Editor-in-Chief  
of Russian Maecenas*





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is intended to show that children with  
hearing difficulties can sing, dance  
and make music perfectly well.  
These creative abilities are provided  
by doctors, teachers and social  
workers — genuine benefactors  
of health.**

*Ekaterina ARTYUSHKINA,  
General Director  
of St. Petersburg Concert / p. 34–47*



# A Film Library in Nevsky Prospekt

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LEGENDS OF RUSSIAN CINEMA IN ST. PETERSBURG'S MAIN THOROUGHFARE

Sergey TEPLOV. Photo: Andrey Pronin (Baltphoto), Dmitry Fufayev, the archive of the St. Petersburg State Institute of Cinema and Television



## Theme of the Year

Nevsky Prospekt, described so memorably in Gogol's story, has seen a great deal in its time, but never anything like this — films, and more besides, in the Year of Russian Cinema! Placards with iconic scenes from Russian films on all the bus shelters from the Hermitage to Ploshchad Vosstaniya were examined with interest by passengers and people passing by. And from his pedestal in Malaya Konyushennaya Street Gogol himself watched with curiosity passing trolleybuses decorated with stills from films featuring famous actors and actresses. And if he was able to travel on one of those trolleybuses, he would have seen screens showing material about the St. Petersburg State Institute of Cinema and Television, the originator of the *Legends of Russian Cinema* project supported by the City Government.

Older residents remember when there was a plethora of cinemas in this particular section of Nevsky Prospekt, so that if you were unable to buy tickets at one of them or the time of a showing was unsuitable, it was easy to go from the *Neva* to the *Coliseum*, from the *October* to the *Titan*, from the *Aurora* to the *Znanie*, or to dive into the courtyard where the *Chronicle* (later *Stereokino*) was located.

Just as *The Meeting Place Cannot be Changed*, so the timing was also appropriate. The project coincided with the height of the tourist season: from the Day of the Foundation of St. Petersburg on 27 May to the Day of Russian Cinema on 27 August — the best three months in the unpredictable St. Petersburg climate! This meant that the Northern Capital's numerous visitors, as well as the city's residents, had the opportunity of seeing popular actors and actresses in close-up, particularly those whose life and work was linked with St. Petersburg: Vasily Merkuriev, Kirill Lavrov, Igor Gorbachev, Pavel Luspekayev. Glikeria Bogdanova-Chesnokova... As the poet Zhukovsky wrote, 'Do not say wistfully that they are no more, but be grateful that they lived'. The organizers tried to ensure that the bus shelters devoted to



Ten trolleybuses such as this ran between the 22 bus shelters in Nevsky Prospekt.

...the Northern Capital's visitors, as well as the city's residents, had the opportunity of seeing popular actors and actresses in close-up...







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particular film stars were located close to the theatres where they worked. After all, that is also a St. Petersburg phenomenon — the proximity of theatres to Nevsky Prospekt. It was no problem for the Lensoviet Theatre's current actors to stroll to the junction of Nevsky and Vladimirsky Prospekts and have their photographs taken with the placard of Igor Vladimirov...

The idea of turning the main thoroughfare into a large film library could probably only have arisen in a city where the first public film show in Russia took place 120 years ago, where the country's first permanent cinema and first film studio opened... And it was just as natural that the idea originated in Russia's first higher educational establishment training professionals for the cinema (founded in 1918) — now the St. Petersburg State Institute of Cinema and Television.

At first the initiators, headed by the Rector — Professor Alexander Evmenov — did not believe that the project could even get off the ground, let alone obtain the necessary consent to be shown in the city. However, the idea was taken up by the Governor, Georgy Poltavchenko, and Vice-Governor Alexander Govorunov — not in their official capacity, but as film fans. Various city bodies operated in harmony: for instance, the bus shelters in Nevsky Prospekt are ideal advertising spaces, but for three months they were unselfishly given over to Russian cinema. Difficulties of a different kind were foreseen: the Faculty of Screen Arts selected films from two studios for the project — five from Mosfilm and five from Lenfilm. The copyrights belong to Mosfilm and the State Film Fund, but those august organizations readily provided the requested frames.

Today Professor Evmenov evaluates the result of these collective efforts with two meaningful phrases. The first is: 'The main thing is that they managed it in time.' Indeed, what had initially seemed totally impracticable was actually completed in just one month! The second is: 'It's good that we did this'.



Students of the St. Petersburg State Institute of Cinema and Television: souvenir photograph taken on the day the project was launched.

The project was launched by Alexander Evmenov, Rector of the Cinema and Television Institute, and Sergey Serezleyev, Chairman of the St. Petersburg Committee on Press and Media Cooperation.





Leonid Mozgovoy is telling these girls about the great actor Kirill Lavrov. Incidentally, the two actors have something in common: they both played Lenin.

Igor Vladimirov taught Anna Alexakhina at theatrical college and she worked under his direction at the Lensoviet Theatre for about twenty years.

By 'good' the rector was referring to the reaction of passers-by: some walked round the bus stop, stood and smiled, then went on their way with happy faces. Others, mainly young people, tweeted and took selfies. Maybe they remembered seeing the old films on TV.

My question about the connection between the *Legends* project and the educational process rather puzzled the rector — after all, the connections are obvious. With the *History of Russian Cinema* course and with the lecturers — Eduard Rozovsky, for example, who made the legendary films *Amphibian Man* and *White Sun of the Desert* and has headed the institute's Camera Department for twenty years. Those who come from the regions may not know classic Soviet films, but when they become students at the Institute — future film historians, playwrights, directors, cameramen and actors of stage and screen — they



certainly know them! And they pass on their knowledge to the young — during cinema lessons at the *Mayak* Summer Camp at Vyritsa and at the *Sirius* Educational Centre in Sochi. They make films with the children, and this is the uniting mission of cinema.

On the day the project started students of the Cinema and Television Institute went from one bus stop to another, chatting with people about the films and the actors and actresses in them. Perhaps this engendered in some of them the dream of making or starring in their own film which would go down in the history of Russian cinema? And in July the Institute's lecturers followed in the students' footsteps in going 'to the people'.

The Department of Artistic Screen Professions, training actors and actresses for the theatre and cinema, is already in its second year. The Head of Department, Anna Ekaterinskaya,



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Candidate of Art History and actress of stage and screen (about thirty films and serials), has just finished filming *Dovlatov* with Alexey German jnr. A year ago Honoured Artist of Russia Leonid Mozgovoy, an actor with *St. Petersburg Concert*, began to run a course in acting. He has won international fame for his leading roles in Alexander Sokurov's films. This year People's Artist of Russia Anna Alexakhina, an actress at the Lensoviet Theatre (she has over forty films and serials to her credit) accepted students into her studio. She has a huge amount of acting experience to pass on to them.

One point of interest is that there are two scholarships in Mozgovoy's course named after celebrated actors — Kirill Lavrov and Alisa Freundlich — and two more in Alexakhina's course named after Igor Vladimirov and Mikhail Boyarsky. Each of these names is a legend.

— Modern cinema accustoms audiences to an entirely different language, — said Professor Evmenov, summing up our conversation, — but legendary films such as *Taming of the Fire* or *Wedding in Malinovka*, which I first saw in my youth, took into account our viewers' mentality and that is why they are still popular. After all, we never tire of admiring the masterpieces in the Hermitage. And if we set ourselves the task of reviving Russian cinema, we constantly have to refer back to its best examples.

We will do our own summing-up. For three months this summer the city centre turned into an improvised cinema, and a ride or walk along Nevsky Prospekt into an entertaining film show. After all, the frames on the sides of trolleybuses move, and passengers are carried past the bus shelters with film posters! There is no wish to use the language of officialdom and call it 'propaganda of the best works of Russian cinema art' or 'the popularization of masterpieces of our cinema among the rising generation'. It was merely a declaration of love for our country's cinema.



Anna Ekaterininskaya by the bus shelter devoted to the film *Heavenly Slug*, starring the very popular Vasily Merkuriev. Anna comes from a theatrical dynasty: her grandfather, People's Artist of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic Mikhail Ekaterininsky, studied in the same year as Vasily Merkuriev and worked with him at the Pushkin (now Alexandrinsky) Theatre.

A cinema-trolleybus ran through the city.



# Rodina is not for Sale

ONE CENTURY OF A CHILDREN'S CINEMA WITH THE RUSSIAN HISTORY AS THE SCENERY

Vladimir PETROV. Photo: Oxana Solovyova, archives of *Rodina* cinema



Next year will be the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the cinema on Manezhnaya Square in Petrograd, which we know now as *Rodina*, and its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary as the first children's cinema in the country. However, the story of *Rodina's* first years remains a mystery to most people.

In our 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is hard to imagine what life was like a hundred years ago and the disastrous year 1917 that was filled with revolution from February to November. And yet, a certificate that was issued by the Petrograd city administration on January 26, 1917, opens up a peephole to that old life.

'Issued to N. F. Mulert, the wife a 2<sup>nd</sup> guild Petrograd merchant, to certify that on inspection of the grand cinema with a podium for divertissement at 12 Karavannaya St., in section I of the Spasskaya district, pursuant to § 62 of the Mandatory Regulation

for Establishment and Maintenance of Theaters, Circuses, and Public Assembly Halls, it appears possible to open this cinema for the public...'

The permit contained quite a few special requirements. For example, the number of visitors at any one point was not to exceed 526 in the stalls and 100 on the balcony, the podium was not to be transformed into a stage, and there had to be candles or oil lamps available in addition to electric lights. The certificate was valid for just one year.

And history made sure that the owner of the new cinema, which was named *Splendid Palace*, would never exceed that term. In just a year, a film called *Compaction* would be shown there; Anatoly Lunacharsky, the People's Commissar for Education, wrote its script about workers who would finally live properly in



rich people's apartments. Apparently, it was the first experience of government order in the film industry.

The house on 12 Karavannaya Street was built in 1914–1915 in the Italian palazzo style by the design of architects K. Pokrovsky and B. Botkin. The façades and interior were designed by A. Gromov, a famous model sculptor. The building was intended for the Petrograd Province Credit Society. The statues under the roof of two griffons, the mythical wardens of wealth, still remind of that. By today's standards, it was something like an office, shopping, and entertainment center. On the top floors there were bank offices and a big hall for stock transactions, on the first floor there was a cinema and gambling rooms, and the ground floor was occupied by shops.





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The new laws of life 'compacted' the house on Manezhnaya Square very soon but did not squeeze the cinema out altogether. In 1924, with the palazzo splendor all gone, *Splendid Palace* was renamed as *Rot Front* as a sign of solidarity with German workers. One of its pianists in the silent film times was Dmitri Shostakovich who was then a Conservatory student. However, in 1930 *Rot Front* celebrated the premiere of *The Pass to Life*, the first Soviet sound film, which started a new era in the history of film.

Already in 1918, the first children's movie, *The Signal* after Vsevolod Garshin's story, was made in Soviet Russia. The People's Commissariat for Education with Lunacharsky and Nadezhda Krupskaya promoted film as a tool for out-of-school education and propaganda of Communist ideas. Since the 1920s, the production of films for children became a system.

Below is a wonderful quote from Krupskaya's speech at a 1927 meeting on children's film: '...the content of films deserves special attention, and it is not that all of them should show the Pioneer movement with endless ranks of Pioneers marching and no action, as that would only tire the children. Images of Sovnarkom meetings and similar are of no use either. They mean a lot to adults who fought for the Soviet power but not to children. One needs to create a completely new sort of film, for example, one showing children excited about doing some work together, doing useful things for the public, one showing the daily struggle for a better order and cause, and so on.'

Krupskaya began that speech by remembering how 15 years earlier (i.e., before WWI) she attended a meeting in Paris on 'adapting film to schools and making it a teaching aid'. In the middle 1930s, the time came to address such matters in the USSR. Soyuzdetfilm, a children's film studio, was organized at Mezhrabpom-film, and one year later *Rot Front* was assigned the status of the first children's cinema in the country by a Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR.





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*Fontanka flows like in the old days.  
And there stands a palace.  
But the house where the tsar used to live  
Is home to other residents now.  
There is everything in stock for them here.  
There are palettes and easels,  
And a talking cinema,  
And chamber concerts.*

In this Samuil Marshak poem about the Pioneers Palace, which opened in 1937, the author dissembled a bit. The 'talking cinema' was close by, at 12 Karavannaya Street. Still, there is no doubt that the proximity of the Pioneers Palace affected the choice of Rot Front as the first children's cinema. Speaking in modern terms, there was a culture cluster for children developed in downtown Leningrad.

An estimable part of *Rodina's* history is the morning New Year celebrations for children in the starving winter of 1942. Remarkably,







the theater's name was changed to *Rodina* in 1945 when solidarity with German workers was no longer on the agenda.

In the postwar years, the children's cinema lived the regular life of a culture and ideology institution. This is the place where many generations of today's adults aged 45 and older saw the best Soviet films. In the 1990s, home video became popular and the state film distribution system collapsed, and it seemed that the children's cinema center had no chance of surviving. But, thanks to bureaucracy, the status of a state budget institution of culture was stipulated in documents which sly 'privatizers' have never got hold of. *Rodina* has remained a unique institution with an educational mission.

The children's cinema center is not trying to compete with multiplexes where entire families come together because there is plenty of other entertainment besides movies. And though most films at *Rodina* are the modern popular type, which helps the finances, there are also special demonstrations held on a regular basis. These are retrospective demonstrations of great masters and films that are undeservedly left out of broad release. Every such event requires serious preparation, advertising, and logistics (one gets nervous if the show is tomorrow and the film copy has not arrived yet).

— These events are the beacons we make for film lovers, — said Alexey Nedviga who is in charge of the program policy. — In teenage years, when one is learning to make one's own choice, it is especially important to get as many art impressions as possible. One should not be afraid of strange or even bad movies because one needs to compare the obviously good with something. Someone will stay blind and deaf to the beautiful, and that cannot be helped. But taste can be nurtured with nothing but choice. We are trying to give this option to our viewers.

The collection of thank-you letters to the *Rodina* cinema center is an eloquent indicator of its intensive cooperation with the city schools and children's organizations. And there, the supply matches the demand. *Rodina* responds when schools ask to





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organize shows on specific subjects and asks their help in its own initiatives — especially in the Year of Film! Lyudmila Zlygosteva, Head of the Little Nevsky Lion day camp at the Russian Museum gymnasium, said that drawings of their students are always present at exhibitions that *Rodina* organizes, and the words ‘Why is cinema our friend and what do we need it for’ is not just a quiz name but a start to funny children’s games, as everyone remembers making one’s own cartoons on the corners of a thick notebook.

— And coming to *Rodina* is always a great event for the children, especially on a rainy day which happen so often this summer, — said Lyudmila Mikhaylovna with children around her in the theater lobby. — Modern kids have plenty of entertainment; one cannot get them off their phone games. And yet, when they watch a good-hearted cartoon story, it is like their eyes open wide. They draw with black-and-white pencils in the morning and take colored ones after the movie.



In 2014, students of the St. Petersburg Stieglitz State Academy of Art and Design renovated the first floor of the *Rodina* cinema center.

... *Rodina* has remained a unique institution with an educational mission...



# The Backstage Movie Studio

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A MYSTERIOUS TOUR OF LENFILM ON A WHITE NIGHT

Alexander POZDNYAKOV. Photo: Nadya KUZNETSOVA



Pavel Kuropatkin, a young reporter of *Vesti Peterburga* newspaper with an assignment to write a story on Lenfilm, dropped behind from his group of journalists who came for a briefing and simply lost his way. He could not keep his eyes off the studio which he had never seen from the inside but read so much about. Having spent some time looking at the Sleeping Beauty's castle and admiring Cinderella's beautiful shiny glass slipper, Pavel entered a garage. He got inside a Delaunay-Belleville, turned the steering wheel imagining himself a chauffeur of the historical vehicle, and pressed the rubber bulb. The klaxon made a booming trumpet honk, which probably sounded just like 1913. Around them, there were sleepy Buicks, Fords, and even a funny Studebaker 4. All of them had been shown in dozens of films and seated Armen Dzhigarkhanyan, Donatas Banionis, and Tatyana Piletskaya.

The reporter moved to the back seat of the car and... dozed off. He dreamed of whizzing through the streets of Petrograd in gaiters and

riding glasses. Although short, the dream left an impression like Pavel had watched several films at once.

He woke up and found the garage door locked from the outside. It was twilight, he saw through the eyehole. The young man walked around the dark varnished engines and touched the hood of an old Ford and the silvery nickel-plated letters on the radiator. I could stay locked here for the night, Pavel thought in dismay, or even the weekend because it is Friday.

But soon, he found a fire exit, opened the creaky door a little, and went up the chipped steps to a vast room that looked like a factory workshop full of every sort of furniture.

There were Chippendale chairs, Jacob cabinets, cozy causeuses where *mam'selle* singers were lying in *The Straw Hat*, old walnut suites from Yan Frid costume performances, Gothic armchairs looking like royal thrones, Psyche mirrors, buffets of stained oak that looked like



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Carolingian cathedrals, and a red glass vial with an ornate monogram. In the corner, there was a balding bear with a card tray and a long-case striking clock. On the gaming table, there was a five-candle chandelier that looked like *The Dog in the Manger*...

Dimly lit with gridded vandal-resistant lamps, the corridor was filled with all kinds of stuff. There were royalty busts, dusty swans of white satin, candy and Indian tea boxes, a soapstone owl-shaped bed lamp, a color lithography picturing a view of Rome from Janiculum Hill, leather trunks, and copper jugs. Pavel recognized a statue of Kirov with an outstretched hand, which he had definitely seen in *A Big Family*...

The walls in a small closet were covered with heavy kiots, tarnished icons, and wedding wreaths. A marble girl on a palisander console was peeling an orange. Pavel opened up the encrusted lid of a Lichtenthal piano and struck a key. Wonder who played it, he thought... The reporter saw a light shining from the curtain. The clock made a booming sound. It was midnight... The door guards were two Venetian pageboys with handsome faces. He could tell these guys from anyone, as they made quite an appearance in *Mr. X*, behind Lanovoy's back in *Into the Storm*, and in *Die Fledermaus*...

Pavel came closer and saw that the door was not locked. He pushed it and found himself in an endless corridor filled with wool and velvet costumes — camisoles of the Peter the Great's times, Hussar jackets, Cavalier Guard uniforms, epaulets, cuirasses, and morions. Pavel put a helmet on and gazed at his reflection in a dusty mirror/A *cavaliero* from Kozintsev's *Don Quixote* glanced back.

The stairs went up, and soon the reporter found himself on the last floor of a tower with lancet windows viewing a red brick chimney, a grim crack on the firewall, and a group of chestnut trees around a memorial with the names of Lenfilm people who fell in the Great Patriotic War.

The place was deserted and smelled of pigeon litter. The yellowish newspaper shreds suggested that the last time someone came here was in 1963. My God, he thought, my parents were still in kindergarten.







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On the unsightly wall covered with blotches and mold, there was a rusty fire bell covered with chipped paint. When did it ring last time? Might have been before the war.

Pavel remembered the chalk hills around Upper Lubyanka and the little bleached houses by the river. A winding asphalt road ran to Volokonovka. There, on the Oskol shore there was a girl called Zina (or was it Nina?). Pavel's wanderings around Lenfilm were becoming more and more interesting and evoked some old memories — were they from films? Or from his own life?

The staircase got all dark, and the young man found himself in a dungeon. He saw big fish hatcheries covered in white tiles where sturgeons for the Aquarium restaurant had been kept before it was turned into Pavilion 1 in 1924. He heard muffled tableware clatter, music, and voices from somewhere above. Or was it just an illusion? One more step, and Pavel saw huge transformers, current generators, lighting fixtures, and projectors with mirror surfaces covered in fine cracks — the craquelures of film history. The power substation room was filled with a quiet buzz that resembled of bee humming. Pavel got his Nokia out and dialed his girlfriend's number.

— Liz, you won't believe it, I'm in Ali Baba caves! Full of teeming treasures, all made of plywood and foam rubber, — he felt himself the Earl of Carnarvon who had just entered the vault of an Egyptian pyramid.

— Have you been smoking weed? Where are you?

— No idea. There are Bukhara gowns and wires around me, porcelain vases with herons and portraits of the chiefs.

— Call me back when you sleep yourself sober, — Liza hung up abruptly.

Out of humor again, Pavel thought. He turned round the corner and found himself in front of an elevator the size of a railway compartment, which probably had not been used since Khrushchev's time. There was a stucco ceiling with flower garlands and Renaissance arabesques. It looked like a decoration to Nathanael West's *The Day of the Locust* with only a fire missing.









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The Lenfilm backstage made Pavel wonder what his story could be about. Would it be these piles of antiques — the mould of time? Or the dark-browed Elizabeth Taylor swinging her magic wand and the angel-like Janina Žejmo dancing to Spadavecchia music? That was the place where Eisenstein, Averbach, and Aleksei German had created their masterpieces, the place where Ava Gardner and Lyudmila Gurchenko had reigned. A curious object attracted his gaze — what was it? Hell knows: might be a table or a support. ‘A tripod,’ a mysterious voice said, and the echo disappeared in the darkness.

Pavel found himself in the production manager’s room (or that was what the door plate read). Nice job, he thought, sitting and watching films for free with pretty starlets fluttering around.

The room was isolated from the outer world with wooden blinds and contained exactly 57 seats. Under the ceilings there were old-fashioned Kometa loudspeakers, and on the back wall there was a control panel with tumblers and a red handset.

To the left of the screen there was a secret door leading to the manager’s office. Oh God — it was unlocked! Gandalf the wizard had left a QR code here for such pilgrims. Pavel directed his phone on the graphic sign and read: ‘The desk in the manager’s office was always opposite the entrance door, just like now. It used to be a Karelian birch piece with bronze plates and a glass bead lamp on the ceiling. The furniture and the lamp were lost in the numerous reorganizations and renovations, just like the milk jug with an Aquarium logo and the Lenfilm banner with orders. In the early 2000s, the window frames in the Lenfilm offices were replaced. The dry pine frames with many layers of bleach were dumped in the corridors. One of such wooden bits was cut into four pieces and transformed into a photo frame.’

Behind Pavel’s back, the light of a projector shone through the narrow loopholes. It chirred like a cicada, and the film ran between the spindles at 24 shots per second. He saw a gentleman in a top hat, a scarf, and a black mask on the screen — it was Mr. X. All of a sudden,



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*...there were sleepy Buicks, Fords, and even a funny Studebaker 4. All of them had been shown in dozens of films...*



## Theme of the Year



he was replaced by Katya Tatarinova from *The Two Captains* — Olga Zabotkina's incredible eyes were shining with love.

Pavel heard a gentle Andrey Petrov melody and saw the silvery figure of Ichthyander swimming out of his hole. The reporter looked inside the control room; the window to the yard was cut so one could get out and climb down the iron ladder if there was a fire. The young man could not believe his eyes; it was a white night and there came the Amphibian Man! Pavel looked inside the little room where the film was rewound. There was a movie technician drinking her tea. Who was she showing the movie to? Pavel peeped through the little window and saw that the blue chairs in the manager's room were empty.

A phone on the control panel rang out of the blue. Pavel picked the red receiver and heard a sepulchral voice saying, 'Proceed to Pavilion 5.' Pavel felt weird — it was something mystic! He went into the yard and followed the signs to pavilion 5. Round the corner, he heard music playing in the two brightly lit windows in the passage between numbers 10 and 12 on Kamennooostrovsky Avenue. It was the famous Lenfilm café.

Here and there on the walls there were little red boxes with glass windows and alarm buttons inside. The emergency hammer to break the glass in the event of a fire had probably been stolen before the war. Those boxes with their glass eyes and the empty hammer holder hung like a memory of the traditional meaningless habit to steal anything.

And there was the enormous fifth pavilion, a former market. Pavel sneaked into the huge dusky room. Macabristic images of half-naked figurines, monsters, and gargouilles — oh, that was Bosch! All Pavel could think about was survival. The air smelled of sulfur. It looked like a witch coven on the Bald Mountain. Two black birds flew out of the banner where the 3D mapping was projected, made a circle under the riveted dome of the pavilion, and hid in the darkness. This bit is more like Goya, Pavel thought. 'The sleep of reason produces monsters.'

An earthly voice brought him back to reality. — What are you doing here, young man? — an elderly guard in a jacket with the Lenfilm logo on the chest enquired abruptly.





## Theme of the Year



Material in the section is supported by a St. Petersburg grant.

— I am a reporter from *Vesti Peterburga*. I have lost my way. And I think I saw Ichthyander holding the hand of Cinderella.

— You reporters do have fantasies, — the guard smiled in his moustache. — I think it was Gutiere. Cinderella is a bit too old for him, I am afraid.

...Pavel was sitting in a café and staring at the window. On the wall there was a picture of Elizabeth Taylor as Fairy Queen of Light. In his thoughts, he was still away, among Boschian visions. His mobile rang. Liza wanted to know if he was OK now.

— You know, Cinderella is too old for me, — Pavel replied sadly. — I saw three fat men who tried to overthrow Cain XVIII and will write a story about it. I do not know what the editor says, though...

— You definitely need a psychiatrist, — Liza snapped. — It is the white nights for you.

— Or maybe I will write a script on how I dreamed awake. It is another planet. It is the space, and I am an alien.

There were short beeps in his phone, but that did not upset Pavel the tiniest bit...

“*...I saw three fat men who tried to overthrow Cain XVIII and will write a story about it...*”



# How Endowments Can Help

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THE 20TH ST. PETERSBURG INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC FORUM EVALUATED THE CONTRIBUTION OF PHILANTHROPISTS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF SECONDARY AND HIGH SCHOOLS

Sergey LIDIN. Photo: the SPIEF Photobank



**SPIEF'16**  
ST. PETERSBURG  
INTERNATIONAL  
ECONOMIC  
FORUM

For the first time the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum was held at a venue commensurate with its status and significance — at *ExpoForum*, a huge comfortable modern complex halfway from the city centre to Pulkovo Airport with a conference centre, meeting rooms and exhibition halls all under the same roof. The new architectural surroundings prompted a newly designed programme for the forum, including interesting crossover themes. For instance, a panel discussion entitled *Philanthropy and Patronage — the Answer to the Economic Challenges of the Future* was entirely devoted to the interaction of state bodies and private initiatives in the field of education.

It is generally considered a good thing for business to help schools in the purchase of visual aids and in the refurbishment of buildings, but the task of responsible businesses is actually more extensive — to establish an environment conducive to the

development of pupils' creative potential, technical and financial competence and ability to think critically while learning new skills. This capital will enable the young generation to be successful in life and look to the future with confidence.

It is particularly important to guarantee a level playing field in education throughout Russia. This aim is being pursued in earnest by the Sberbank of Russia's charitable foundation *Investment in the Future*. Yulia Chechet, its Executive Director, says the foundation was launched comparatively recently — last November, but several months before that the bank supported a group of enthusiasts from St. Petersburg who had initiated the *Teacher for Russia* project, helping to attract graduates of the capital's leading higher education establishments to village schools in the regions to develop their teaching and leadership potential. Similar programmes operate effectively in 37 countries.

“...without private investment education will not be given the impetus for competitive development...”



## Investment in Intellect

A school at Buturlinovka in the Voronezh Region was chosen as the fulcrum of the project. The young specialists who go there work for five weeks in the summer, following which they receive a grant from the foundation for two years. The first results are obvious: the school's pupils win academic competitions, join clubs and participate in design projects. It is reassuring that whereas in 2015 the foundation ran the programme alone, the regions — in particular the Kaluga Region — are now prepared to take part in its financing. Yulia Chechet believes this may lead to a national state-private partnership project in the education field.

For its part the foundation intends to pursue other groundbreaking programmes: *Emotional Intellect in School* and *4K of the Modern World* (critical creative thinking, collaboration and communication), complementing the standard state education with new tools. This broadening of the school curriculum and extra lessons has been accompanied by an increase in navigational programmes for parents. It is natural that every parent wants their child to go to a good school, but when asked to define a 'good school' many of them are at a loss. The foundation's experts help them to figure it out.

Another project the foundation is involved in is the international research *Education and Social Progress* led by Nobel Prize winner James Heckman. The aim of the research is to understand the factors in family, school and society that influence the formation of a personality and determine his or her well-being and social progress in our rapidly changing world. It will make it possible to amend the country's education policy in the light of new challenges.

Polina Filippova, Director of the Ziyavudin Magomedov *PERI* Charitable Foundation, supported her colleague in assessing the possibilities of private initiatives to influence the field of education. It is foundations such as these which provide the opportunity to try new methods and approaches, discard what does not work and offer the state those that promise qualitative changes for the better. *PERI*



is proving this in its pilot region of Dagestan. *The Educational Space of the Future*, an international workshop run by the foundation, is targeted at the setting-up of the *Perimeter* Cultural-Educational Centre in Makhachkala.

The proposition concerning the inalienable right to private initiatives in the educational field as an indispensable condition of its progress has been developed by Alexey Kudrin, Chairman of the Board of the Centre of Strategic Development and Deputy Chairman of the Russian President's Economic Council, who is very familiar with the practice of endowments (target capital funds) in Western universities. This practice is developed to such an extent

Speakers at the session (left to right): Mikhail Shamolin, President and Chairman of the Board of *Sistema Finance Company*; Joe Avison, Managing Director of *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*; Alexey Kudrin, Chairman of the Board of the Centre of Strategic Development; Oleg Kharkhordin, Rector of the European University in St. Petersburg; Yulia Chechet, Executive Director of the *Investment in the Future Charitable Foundation*; Polina Filippova, Director of the *PERI* Charitable Foundation.



Alexey Kudrin knows how university endowments are drawn up.

*An example of the contribution of business to education: the Skolkovo School of Management in Moscow, one of the leading business schools in Russia and the CIS. It was founded in 2006 on the initiative of the business community but is funded by private donations. In nine years 12,000 students have taken courses there.*



Oleg Kharkhordin and Yulia Chechet are in favour of joint projects between universities and business.



that the endowments of some faculties are comparable with those of whole universities. As a rule they are targeted and the state has no right to dictate the research programme. This independence is the bedrock of universities' innovative projects — in addition to their traditional programmes new developments and educational models are introduced with the investor's agreement. According to Kudrin, almost all the breakthrough research at the renowned MTI (Massachusetts Technological Institute) is financed by private investment, either gratis or with an agreed right to use the results. In Russia, though, the freedom to choose programmes and methods of education is in a Procrustean bed of state regulation and agreements, sometimes leading to control over every detail.

Apart from endowments, another interesting idea is private investment in short-term university programmes (from one to three

years). The principle of academic freedom still applies in this case. Alexey Kudrin is optimistic with regard to Russian endowments: the volume of investments in them may increase threefold in the next five to seven years. Kudrin knows all about investors' expectations as he is assisting with the increase of at least five target capital funds of various educational and scientific establishments. He is particularly annoyed that our rich fellow-citizens are on the boards of guardians of leading world universities and invest tens of millions of dollars in them (maybe because their children are studying there?). They help our endowments too, but — alas — to a much more modest extent.

However, a partial explanation of this paradox was given by the speaker himself, who gave the example of a Russian university whose endowment was drawn up by state companies on orders from above. This is not philanthropy, but mutation...

Mikhail Shamolin, President, Chairman of the Board and Executive Director of *Sistema Finance Company*, confirmed that the volume of private donations in Russia is generally fairly low in comparison with other countries — around 0.3% of GDP, while in the USA it is 2%. In concrete figures the difference is even more startling. There are also striking differences in the structure of charitable work: whereas in the West 80% of donations are made by private individuals and 20% by companies, in Russia it is exactly the opposite. We have to change the proportion both by encouraging private donations, primarily by tax breaks, and by rejecting any 'orders' that pervert the essence of philanthropy.

The participants in the discussion were in agreement that without private investment education will not be given the impetus for competitive development. The support of state bodies ensures basic progress but also imposes preconditions that limit the use of resources, do not react in time to urgent needs and the launch of new programmes for the support of the best professors. What now has to be done is to determine the extent of state and business involvement in the educational process that is vitally important for the country and for society.



# In a Gazprom Class for the First Time

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THE COMPANY IS FORMING A PERSONNEL TRAINING CHAIN FROM SCHOOL LEVEL

Arkady SOSNOV. Photo: Evgeny Shcherbakov (Gazprom Transgaz St. Petersburg)

## THE SENIOR PUPIL

Thirty pupils, each with their own character, passions and ambitions, have entered the first Gazprom class in St. Petersburg — Class 10 'A' at High School No. 330 in the Nevsky District. Lads like Viktor Vasiliev are usually described by teachers as being industrious, by which they mean diligent, well brought-up and modest. And this modest young man passed his exams in maths, Russian and chemistry with top marks, missed the highest degree in physics by a whisker and in total came fourth in the class in the school-leaving certificate.

Viktor is a fifth-generation Leningrad — St. Petersburg resident. He will tell you about his great-grandmother on his father's side who served as a military telegraphist during the siege, about her romantic meeting with his great-grandfather and about his relatives on his mother's side who survived the blockade. He knows the family history

from his parents: his mother is an animated film director and his father is an HGV driver, so neither of them has any connection with the gas industry. The competition was open to all the city's schoolchildren, with no prior preferences. The main selection criteria were the results of the state exams in maths and physics and the total marks in the school-leaving certificate.

The teachers and potential employers additionally studied portfolios in which the young people not only provided information about their achievements in academic competitions but also included their ideas about their future. Their self-appraisals were taken into account when enrolling them in the Gazprom class. Some of them saw themselves as future ministers, the heads of major companies or successful managers, while others merely aspired to be reliable professional engineers.





*The first specialized Gazprom class in St. Petersburg was established on the basis of a tripartite agreement between High School No. 330, Gazprom Transgaz St. Petersburg and the St. Petersburg University of Economics and Finance.*

*The 10th and 11th classes at the high school will provide in-depth education in maths, economics, physics and IT — the disciplines which correspond with the company's basic activities. It is planned that graduates will continue their studies at prestigious higher educational establishments in St. Petersburg: the Peter the Great Polytechnic University, the Gorny National Minerals and Raw Materials University and the University of Economics and Finance.*

*Gazprom classes supported by the corporation's subsidiary companies are currently operating in Novy Urengoy, the Samara Region, Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, Murmansk, Yugorsk, Surgut, Kazan, Tomsk, Ukhta, Nadym, Tchaikovsky and Mozhga.*

*A Gazprom class is a unique means of training school-leavers for engineering professions and a source of personnel recruitment. The project fully meets state educational standards and is aimed at the identification of pupils' individual abilities in order to produce creative personalities with high morals.*

Viktor Vasiliev: two years in the Gazprom class lie ahead.



Viktor Vasiliev is a classic example of a young man considering his future. He is not obsessed with any particular subject: at various times he was keen on history, wrote an essay on Ivan Koenig (1822–1880), Director of the Nikolayevsky Railway, and took part in a nationwide essay competition. He is now interested in astronomy, reads books about stars and comets and is saving for a manually adjustable telescope. He simply wants to try his hand at many things.

He nevertheless signed his application for the Gazprom class without hesitation after clarifying that his beloved mathematics were given priority in the study plan — and his parents supported their son's choice. According to Viktor, entering the class turned out to be easier than he had expected, and he has already decided to take extra courses in maths and computer programming run by the St. Petersburg Electrotechnical University.

— Getting through the selection process is great, but in the subsequent two years of study we will see what the young people are made of, says Oksana Korenevskaya, the school's headmistress. — They have no obligations after finishing school — they can choose any university. We have also warned the parents that only the most successful and motivated graduates will proceed to the special selection. They are the ones that the higher educational establishments and Gazprom are interested in. Targeted study is a bonus, but not compulsory.

Specialists from the school's socio-psychological department and lecturers from the higher educational establishments help the senior pupils to decide on their preferences. Tours of Gazprom premises and familiarization with the company's activities give them the opportunity to look into their future. However, when they entered the colourfully designed interiors of the new class, the pupils immediately sensed the pull of Gazprom. As early as October some of them will be going to Nizhny Novgorod to the first annual meeting of Gazprom classes.

The headmistress is in no doubt that Class 10 'A' will be a worthy addition to the country's Gazprom classes. She stresses the difference





between the St. Petersburg class and its predecessors in gas-producing regions — the extensive involvement of universities in the educational process, so encompassing the whole range of disciplines necessary for specialists in the gas industry.

The high school now actually concentrates on humanities, but it was once a mathematical school and in the last few years a third of school-leavers have gone on to technical colleges (by the way, Oksana Korenevskaia is a maths teacher herself). High School No. 330 maintains the traditions of patriotic upbringing and has managed to retain a museum established in the Soviet period. The display is constructed as a communication between generations of schoolchildren. On 1 September thirteen pupils entering the Gazprom class from schools in the Nevsky District and other districts in the city visited the museum. The conscious choice of a new place of study is also a sign of motivation!

A note of warning is mixed in with the optimistic expectations: will the young people cope with the extra workload they have opted for? The headmistress judges this on the experience of last year, when lecturers from the St. Petersburg Electrotechnical University held free lessons

for the current 11th class in maths, economics and English. The pupils readily entered into the spirit of a game in which they set up their own business, often remaining at the University until late at night. And they still had to get home and do their homework! The programme planned for pupils of the Gazprom class at the Electrotechnical University and other universities in the city will be along the same lines... Fortunately the high school has an excellent sports centre, so pupils have somewhere to fortify themselves and to keep fit.

— Difficulties cannot be avoided, but these two years will be unforgettable. If you put in effort and endeavour now, it will be much easier for you to study and work in future! — was how the headmistress addressed the pupils.

I wonder which university's selection board will be considering Viktor Vasiliev's documents when he graduates from Class 11 'A' in two years' time?

## STUDENT

Since 2010 Gazprom has been conducting a programme to train specialists for specific jobs. Its first bachelor degree-holders were

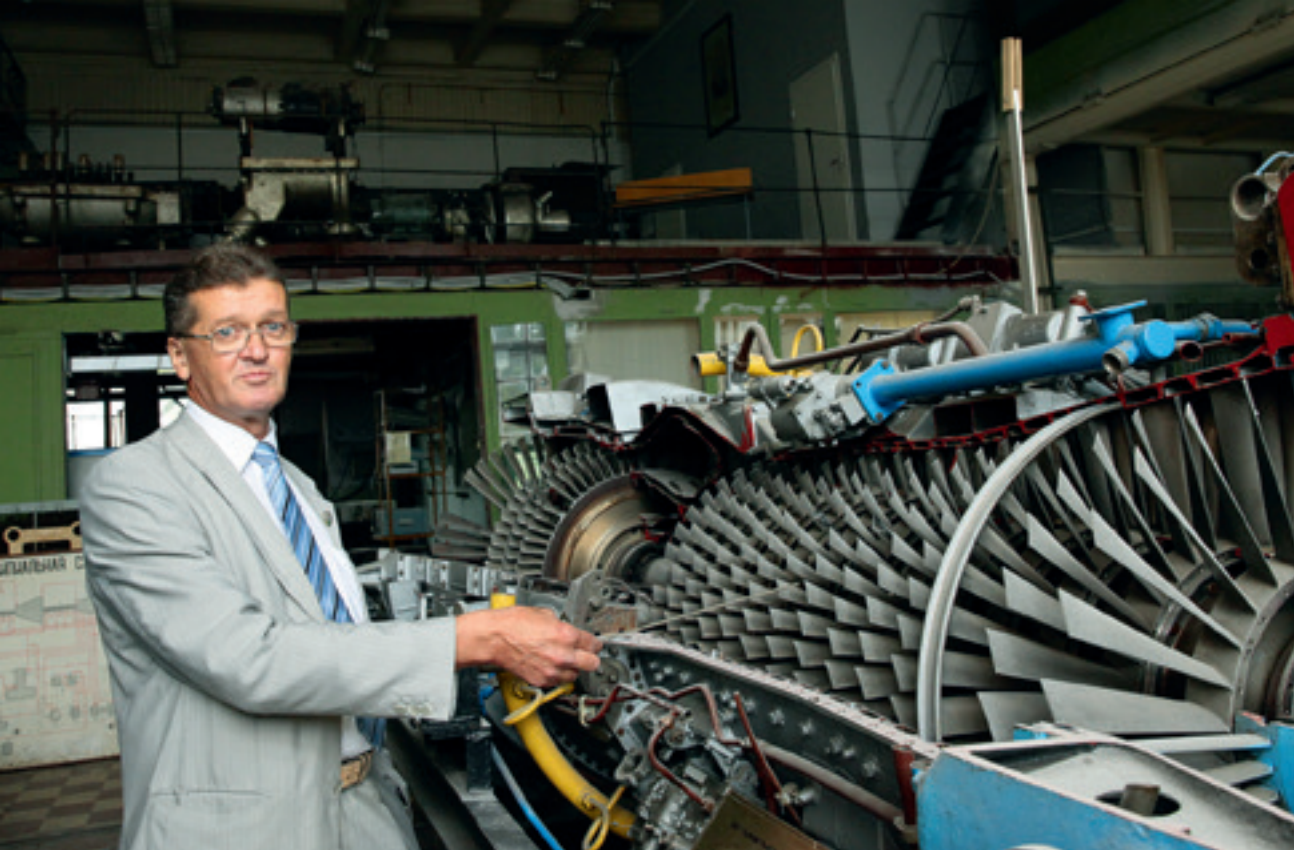
### Left to right:

For Oksana Korenevskaia the new academic year is a special one — her 25th year as a teacher.

So she regards the opening of the Gazprom class in her alma mater (the headmistress and both her daughters are graduates of High School No. 330) as an anniversary present: — The Russian Education Law enables us to open various educational avenues. And this particular avenue is very promising, because it is in demand.

New entrants to the Gazprom class from other schools in the city in the school museum. Methodologist Galina Khmelyova tells them about the history of the school and its graduates. They include 18 year-old sniper Igor Novoselov, who was killed in Chechnya in 1995, the legendary figure-skater and coach Tamara Moskvina, an Honorary Citizen of St. Petersburg, Vasily Shestakov, a Deputy in the State Duma and President of the International Sambo Federation...





**Left to right:**

Professor Nikolay Zabelin demonstrates a gas turbine engine which had outlived its usefulness at the Pikalevo compressor station and has now become a visual aid — the company has given it to the Institute. In order to get the 3.5 ton machine into the Polytechnic University's engineering block it was necessary to build a mini-railway and a viaduct. By looking into the model future specialists can get a full idea of the engine's structure, the purpose of most of its mechanisms, assemblies and components.

Alexey Vinogradov personifies the current trend: his bachelor's degree serves him well in his highly technical job.

accepted for employment in 2014. Their number increases each year, as does the number of senior pupils competing for the special course. There are also master's degree-holders in the pipeline. Most of the targeted students (77) are at the Peter the Great Polytechnic University: 48 of them are at in the Institute of Energy and Transport Systems — 40 are studying for a bachelor's degree and eight, like Alexey Vinogradov, have completed the first year of their master's degree.

Alexey comes from the village of Kholm-Zhirkovsky in the Smolensk Region. After finishing school he applied for the targeted course at the St. Petersburg Polytechnic University (his father had instilled him a love for machinery), though he did not harbour any particular hopes of success: Kholm-Zhirkovsky and St. Petersburg seemed to be worlds apart!

The first three years were the hardest — descriptive geometry, which he had not studied at school, and a very great deal of maths and physics. He then got so fired up that after graduating with a bachelor's





## Investment in Intellect

degree in the department of Turbines, Hydraulic Machines and Aircraft Engines, he enrolled on a full-time master's degree. He wanted to obtain a full higher education.

By that time he was already married with a child, so he found a job in parallel with his studies — as a technological compressor engineer at one of the company's branches — the Severnoye line management of gas mains. Neither the university nor Severnoye had any objections: why not combine theory (17 disciplines!) with practice in his chosen speciality?

— Not all the basic knowledge we pass on to students will be of use to them in practice, but it is a way of exercising the mind, — says Professor Nikolay Zabelin, Director of the Institute and Head of Department, who knows Alexey and the other targeted students personally.

Although his workload has doubled, Vinogradov sees this way of getting into the engineer's profession — by grasping the basics of production — as the correct one. Last summer was particularly difficult for Alexey. In his fifth year, when he had been promised that life would become easier, his workload was greater than ever, including weekends... He had to combine his exams and his shift work with the preparation of a paper to be read at an open scientific-practical conference for Gazprom's young employees. He chose the subject, concerning the modernization of equipment and the increased reliability of the heating system on the industrial site of a compressor station, on the advice of his fellow production workers. He passed his exams with flying colours and received a grant. And at the conference he was not fazed by speaking to an unknown audience and answered twelve questions. He explains the lively interest in his paper by the fact that he produced an animated presentation. Once again the 'exercising of the mind' at the Polytechnic University had helped. Passing tests and exams, presenting papers at the annual Science Week and defending a bachelor's diploma — all this is in the university background of the targeted students.



For Vinogradov his master's dissertation will be a new challenge. He will probably be entrusted with part of the large amount of work the department is undertaking as part of a national target programme for making expansion turbine installations. A specialist who carries out this type of research is no longer considered a 'mid-level engineer' but a 'special mission engineer' in the terminology of Andrey Rudskoy, Rector of the University and a Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

Alexey hopes that his master's degree will help him up the career ladder — to be a shift engineer for a start, and after that... it will all depend on him. He is pursuing a career based on knowledge and is very pleased that his professional life is linked with a steadily developing company like Gazprom Transgaz St. Petersburg.

The list of competencies of a master, as opposed to a bachelor in the same department, includes research, planning, design and teaching, so in a year or two Alexey Vinogradov may well be giving optional lessons to pupils of the Gazprom class.

Georgy Fokin and Andrey Rudskoy, Rector of the Peter the Great Polytechnic University and Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, after signing an agreement concerning the establishment of the basic department Gas Turbine Units for Gas Pumping Stations. May 2015.

*...the company's personnel policy is based on a system of continuous education...*





Ekaterina Yanchenko likes the fact that the company employs many young people involved in various forms of study and increasing their qualifications.

## THE YOUNG SPECIALIST

Gazprom takes on between 50 and 60 people each year, 70% of them with higher education, but not many of them have two degrees like Ekaterina Yanchenko: she has a bachelor degree in IT and computer technology and is an interpreter of professional communication. Quite simply she studied for two degrees at the Polytechnic University at the same time!

## Investment in Intellect

During her study, on her own initiative, she spent each summer working in the IT department at Gazprom Transgaz St. Petersburg and planned to work there or in one of the company's branches after graduation. That was how she ended up in the Severnoye line management of gas mains, in the automated control systems section. According to Ekaterina the section is small but is responsible for everything:

— We are concerned with the full maintenance and control of programmes safeguarding the technological processes, production management and IT security.

Katya has been working for the company for just over a year and has never regretted her choice of specialization. Her university education was wide-ranging and it helps her to fulfil the tasks of an engineer in the automated systems section, even though they are of a more applied character. The novelty of the tasks is merely an excuse for her to continue to study and broaden her horizons. The company supports her — it sent her to take part in the St. Petersburg International Gas Forum, which greatly helped her to understand how the gas industry is constructed and how automated it has become.

Again on her own initiative Katya is refreshing her basic knowledge of programming with the aid of the *Coursera* educational Internet resource and is learning new subjects — for example, administration, which was not included in her university course. She recognizes that even two bachelor degrees are insufficient for self-fulfilment, so she is in the process of choosing a specialized master's course in IT. She is looking at universities among the top hundred in the world — her ambitions are high, but her knowledge of English will stand her in good stead in her further study, especially as she has already obtained an IELTS certificate.

Will the company release this single-minded girl for study? It should do, since it regards professionalism as a competitive advantage.

— Gazprom Transgaz St. Petersburg concentrates on developing its employees' potential, — emphasized Georgy Fokin, the company's General Director. — Our personnel policy is based on a system of





continuous education. We actively collaborate with Gazprom's principal higher education establishments; this enables us not only to make adjustments to the programmes by which students learn and our staff increase their qualifications, but also to introduce new courses and even new departments to meet the company's requirements. And with the assistance of the Gazprom class which opened on 1 September we will be able to begin training future gas industry employees direct from school.

It is by no means the first such class in the country, but one can say it is a special one. In a short while, when Gazprom has moved to the Northern Capital, it will be the high qualifications of young employees who have studied the wide range of specialities necessary for the gas industry that will facilitate the uninterrupted and precise operation of the country's huge gas transportation system and the supply of gas in accordance with international contracts.

Good luck with your studies!  
Pupils of the Gazprom class  
in the office refurbished and equipped  
with the company's support.  
St. Petersburg, 1 September 2016.



# Operation plus Adaptation

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PROFESSOR YURY YANOV, DIRECTOR OF THE ST. PETERSBURG EAR, NOSE AND THROAT RESEARCH INSTITUTE,  
ON RESTORING HEARING TO CHILDREN DEAF FROM BIRTH

Arkady SOSNOV. Photo: Maxim Neizvestnykh, Maria Istomina and the archive of the *I Hear the World!* Parents' Association



A cochlear implant is the most expensive prosthesis in the world.

*Let us first get the titles out of the way, because our interviewee is an extraordinarily open, benevolent man and our conversation was conducted entirely without ceremony.*

*Yury Konstantinovich Yanov is a Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Honoured Doctor of the Russian Federation, Doctor of Medicine, Professor, Director of the St. Petersburg Ear, Nose and Throat Research Institute, President of the Russian Association of Otolaryngologists and Chief Otolaryngologist of St. Petersburg.*

*This list does not include the most important qualification from Yury Yanov's point of view: he was a military field surgeon and it was his skill as a surgeon ('hands on' experience, as he calls it) that made his name in the profession. It was between operations in a field*

*hospital in Afghanistan that he added a chapter on war wounds to his doctoral thesis. He later became Deputy Head of the Academy of Military Medicine, from where — to the surprise of colleagues — Lieutenant-General Yanov went to the civilian Ear, Nose and Throat Institute.*

*His easy conversational manner is not a sign of lack of ambition. Professor Yanov is convinced that St. Petersburg is the Mecca of Russian otorhinolaryngology and that the institute he has headed since 2000 is the world leader in providing treatment for the deaf and those with impaired hearing, primarily children. The institute carries out a record 500–600 cochlear implants every year. And each operation is a genuine chance for children with serious hearing loss to integrate into normal society.*



## Effective practice

The Director in his office  
with Salvador Dali's composition  
Otorhinological Head of Venus  
behind him.

### — Yuri Konstantinovich, is loss of hearing a matter of fate?

— Our eyes and ears are our gateway to communication. People receive 98% of information through sight and only 1% through hearing. But, as Kant said, 'Blindness cuts us off from things, but deafness cuts us off from people.' In the past in every country, including Ancient Rus, the deaf were treated as outcasts — there were offensive sayings about them. Even the study of deafness — surdology — suggests it has something to do with the absurd (from the Latin *ad absurdum*, 'coming from deafness'). After all, what can you hear from a deaf person except some absurdity? In response to this the deaf got together, invented an alphabet and created their own social group.

Remember one of the characters in Griboyedov's *Woe from Wit* — Prince Tugoukhovsky, a ridiculous old man with an ear trumpet. What does an ear trumpet provide? Between six and twenty decibels, at best. But with the development of medical science and technology we have learned how to successfully treat hearing deprivation (loss of hearing from various pathological causes) and to break down the wall of deafness by a variety of methods.

For instance, in our institute we have mastered cochlear implantation — a tried and trusted, effective method that is also, I stress, absolutely safe. This is fundamentally important when dealing with children who are congenitally deaf or have become deaf. A skilful operation with proper rehabilitation (there is a 90% success rate) provides them with fantastic hearing sensations when compared with a hearing aid, to say nothing of the prehistoric ear trumpet.





Professor Yanov demonstrates a model he made himself — a small temporal bone: 'That is where the cochlea is located. The length of the cochlear duct leading to the aural nerve is 31.5 millimetres. In order to fit an implant the surgeon has to pass through all the turns of the duct'.

**Right:**  
Testing the hearing of a young patient at the St. Petersburg Ear, Nose and Throat Research Institute.



How a cochlear implant works.

### — How widespread is deafness in children?

— One child in a thousand is born deaf, and one more loses its hearing before the age of two. So of 1,700,000 children born in Russia in 2015 1,700 were congenitally deaf. These children have to be urgently indentified, because the sooner a cochlear implant is carried out the greater the probability of the child fully gaining hearing and speech.

In 2008 the Russian Ear, Nose and Throat community, in conjunction with the Russian Ministry of Health, introduced universal audiological screening of newborn babies. Two or three days after birth in every maternity hospital in the country babies are tested for otoacoustic emissions to establish whether or not they can hear.

### — Is the problem recognized at state level?

— Yes, certainly. Russia has a state programme of assistance to the deaf and hard of hearing. Cochlear implantation operations, both as a means of correcting hearing and courses of rehabilitation, are very expensive. They are financed from the budget. Three major institutes, two in Moscow and our institute in St. Petersburg, are involved in the programme. There are now about 7,000 people with cochlear implants in the country, and half of those operations have been carried out in our institute.

The cochlear implantation system is in two parts. The visible part is an inbuilt speech processor behind the child's ear. Inside the ear is the implant that is the essence of the operation. The processor receives a sound signal, transforms it into an electric signal and transmits it to the implant stitched under the skin on the temporal bone, which in turn projects the impulses directly to the auditory nerve that leads to the cochlea. Our little patients start hearing immediately after the processor is switched on... incomprehensible sounds which they have to decipher with the help of adults.

Like a piano the processor has to be tuned and retuned periodically, and that is performed by an electrophysiologist. There are not many such specialists in Russia, and specialists in remote



tuning can be counted on the fingers. We have some who were trained at our institute.

### — Why is remote tuning necessary?

— Every child we operate on, whether from the capital or from a distant region, must receive adequate rehabilitation. None of them is abandoned. Remote tuning enables us to control the implant via the Internet and to see how the parents and local specialists are dealing with the child. Four years ago delegates at a prestigious international conference visited the institute. To their amazement two members of our staff, Viktor Pudov and Sergey Levin, demonstrated how they can tune cochlear implantation systems in Khabarovsk, Novosibirsk... I am proud of my surgeon's profession, but no less proud that I employed these lads at the institute. They are not actually surgeons, but they have a technical education in addition to their medical qualifications. They started from scratch, but now also carry out brainstem implants, which our institute was the first in Russia to



## Effective practice

introduce. It is carried out when it is impossible to place the implant in the cochlea (there are cases where there is no cochlea), when the aural nerves do not operate. These are groundbreaking operations that are rarely performed anywhere in the world.

— **Medical technology is obviously advancing quicker than a snail! [in Russian the word for snail and cochlea is the same]**

— Absolutely. Just consider: the first cochlear implant was fitted in Russia a quarter of a century ago — in Moscow in 1991. Our first operation was carried out only in 1997. Doctors from overseas came to perform the operations and each mission was accompanied by a PR campaign. I came to the institute three years later and as a surgeon could not reconcile myself to the fact that no Russians were fitting cochlear implants.

I immediately set off to study the operation — not in Germany or America, but in Salonika in Greece with Trifon Kiratzidis, a great anatomist and an expert on temporal bones. His whole house is full of them. Together we made a meticulous study of approaches to cochlear implantation, the difficulties and risks involved. How to take into account the state of the patient's health and — God forbid — not to nick the carotid artery. By and large Trifon and I put an end to the Western hegemony on cochlear implantations in Russia!

Since then we have assembled a group of surgeons specializing in cochlear implantation, including three doctors of medical science. European surgeons take two hours to fit a standard cochlear implant, but we can do it in thirty minutes — imagine that! Sometimes we perform ten operations in a day. It is not a speed test, but well-honed technique and hard work. I'll explain why. There used to be a five-year waiting list for the operation. During the waiting period the deafness progressed and speech did not improve. A child could go from being a promising candidate for an implant into a problem, but now this skilled operation has become routine all children with seriously impaired hearing have equal — and good! — chances of recovery.



— **But according to you a successful operation is only 10% of the story...**

— Indeed. Rehabilitation after an implant for a child who has been deaf from birth is particularly difficult. The child's brain cannot process and recognize sounds because there are no aural images in its memory. If somebody says 'Mummy' and for the child it is just a noise, he does not react or does not understand: is someone talking to him or just walking along a corridor? And he cannot say anything! Until we developed a method of aural-oral rehabilitation, for several months we could not determine whether a child could hear. Today, thanks to special sessions with surdopedagogues and the training of parents, children respond to a knock on the door, the ringing of a telephone and their own name within two to four days.

If rehabilitation is left exclusively to medical staff we will not achieve success. It has to involve three ministries — health, education and employment (the parents are a separate subject). The Ministry of Health does its job: selection of patients, operations, tuning of

Sergey Levin, Candidate of Medical Sciences and Senior Researcher in the Department of Diagnostics and Rehabilitation of Impaired Hearing at the St. Petersburg Ear, Nose and Throat Research Institute, carries out the first tuning of an implant on the fourth day after fitting. Four year-old Andrey from the Krasnodar Region, who has been deaf from birth, can still not hear anything and is playing enthusiastically with a steam engine. The tuning with an audiometer is carried out individually in over fifty parameters so that the child can register even the softest sounds.

*In 60% of cases deafness in children is the result of a viral infection in the foetus or in the child's mother, and in 35% of cases the consequence of the ototoxic effect of antibiotics. In only 2–3% of cases is deafness the result of a congenital anomaly of development.*



Evgenia Shashukova, Senior Surdopedagogue at the St. Petersburg Ear, Nose and Throat Research Institute, with five year-old Arina from Nakhodka. The girl was born deaf and was fitted with a double-sided cochlear implant nearly four years ago. This is not the first time that she and her mother have come to St. Petersburg for rehabilitation under the state programme. Arina has learned to talk (she was unable to before the operation), can read, write and dance and is learning to sing! To a large extent this is because she and her parents conscientiously do the 'homework' set by the institute.

A session conducted by surdopedagogue Natalya Kovalyova.



implants and development of elementary aural perception skills. This is followed by instruction, which we also offer, encroaching on Ministry of Education territory. During the first two years after receiving an implant the child undergoes four ten-day courses of rehabilitation at the institute or under the control of specialists in regional centres who are trained by us.

**— Did you take on that obligation voluntarily? You could think pragmatically: we carry out the operations and then pass children into the care of parents, teachers and social workers.**

— That's how some centres in Europe operate, and in Russia too. About thirty specialists participate in the rehabilitation process at the St. Petersburg Ear, Nose and Throat Research Institute — surdopedagogues, audiologists, speech therapists, psychologists, psychotherapists, surdologists, neurologists and paediatricians. It is an unusual selection for a medical establishment. They are all on the staff: the personnel list was re-examined with the increase in cochlear implantations. We accept graduates of faculties of corrective instruction. A playroom has been installed in the institute and a playground in the courtyard. We develop in children an interest in sounds, a desire to listen to adult speech, their own voices and, of course, to talk. However, the task of cochlear implantation, as we see it, is not merely to fit an electrode in a child's ear but also to teach him to orientate himself in the world of sounds and to talk intelligibly. You see, for us the development of speech in deaf children is part of the medical technology connected with the tuning of the implant's processor.

Professor Inna Korolyova, a psychophysiologicalist, is in charge of this comprehensive work. Russia actually has a 200-year tradition of surdopedagoguery and excellent methods of teaching deaf children. But our children are no longer deaf, so the institute was adhering to tradition in devising an original method of aural rehabilitation. And we encountered the problem that there were no tests to evaluate the development of aural skills in children with implants. The cochlear



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implant manufacturers issue aural skills tests in English. We decided to adapt them to Russian speech — not just a translation, but a selection of words that takes into account Russian phonetics, vocabulary and our way of life. The result was a range of Russian tests and computer programs to control the teaching process for patients of different ages, even one year-old babies. Now many foreign colleagues are not averse to translating our rehabilitation material into their own languages.

Of course the education process is dependent on the individual child. Children with mental problems, with serious psychosomatic disorders, are more difficult to teach. However, we always try to structure the rehabilitation in such a way that children's further education will be inclusive — so that they can go to ordinary kindergartens and schools, not special establishments, and are not drawn into the world of the deaf which communicates in sign language.

### — What do you say to Mums and Dads before their child is discharged after the operation?

— Parents are the key factor in the development of a child's hearing and speech, as they spend much more time with him than the teacher. So I never tire of repeating: the most important things are motivation and patience. If you really want to help your child learn to hear sounds, understand speech and talk, put every effort into it. Visit a surdopedagogue and help your child in the tasks he or she is set — not as professionally as the expert, of course, and the results will not come immediately, but with patience they will come.

We know our growing patients go to gyms, study foreign languages and play musical instruments.

### — Was it a revelation to you when the parents of children with impaired hearing formed an association?

— No, because the association was not formed without our participation and is in our common interests. Of course parents talk among themselves, empathize with one another and swap



experiences. The association is a force, a generator of collective opinion that is formed in meetings and on social networks. It is vox pop, not somebody's individual emotion — we are obliged to take notice of it. The parents' union "I Hear the World!" can both support and defend us as doctors. Everything these active mothers and fathers do — taking children to the south for our staff to give them lessons, helping us to hold congresses where the world cochlear implantation society can meet — is, of course, really great.

We in turn try to justify their hopes. Not for nothing is the institute part of the international HEARING network which brings together leading cochlear implantation centres. When I visit centres abroad, it is satisfying to note that we are of the same standard! They may have brighter facades (our facade could certainly do with renovation), but our 'filling' bears comparison with the world's leading clinics — all the advanced treatment that modern otolaryngology can provide.

In the children's playground in the courtyard of the St. Petersburg Ear, Nose and Throat Research Institute.

*Specialists from the St. Petersburg Ear, Nose and Throat Research Institute, in conjunction with staff of the Russian Academy of Sciences Pavlov Institute of Physiology, have devised computer programs for the development and testing of patients' ability to distinguish sounds and speech. These programs are protected by five patents of invention.*

# The prescription is music!



Inna KOROLYOVA, Senior Researcher at the St. Petersburg Ear, Nose and Throat Research Institute, Professor of Otorhinolaryngology at the Mechnikov North-West Medical University and Professor of Teaching of the Deaf at the Herzen Russian State Pedagogical University:

— While waiting for the results of a cochlear implant, parents often expect their child to start talking soon afterwards. We explain to them that the child first has to learn to listen: not only sessions with a deaf teacher or speech therapist are necessary — it is also essential that the child becomes familiar with sounds and takes music lessons. He or she can listen to songs, move in time with the music, ‘play’ toy instruments or real ones and sing along with you, as little children love doing. And if the child can also learn to play a few chords on the guitar, success with classmates is guaranteed! Even if he or she cannot yet speak very well...

I once spent a long time trying to convince the very thoughtful parents of a girl who had been given an implant at the age of eighteen months that music lessons would be good for her, but they did not send her to music school until she was seven, and then did not even tell the school that the child was deaf. She enjoyed learning to play the piano and the violin, but then they came to solfeggio, when she had to sing. The teacher complained to the parents that she was unable to explain to their daughter how to hit high notes, and they finally had to admit that the child was deaf. The teacher did not believe them until she saw the two little speech processors under her hair! After that the lessons continued, taking into account these ‘nuances’. Another important factor was that thanks to her musical studies the girl became more outgoing and communicative, spoke with more confidence, understood speech and even began to learn English. Her relations with her classmates also improved. Now the parents really regret that they did not give her the chance to study music earlier.

On the subject of high notes... Increasing the possibilities of appreciating music is one of the principal avenues of development after a cochlear implant. When these systems were first introduced, the designers’ main concern was that deaf people should be able to hear

and understand speech. And at a certain level of development of the technology this began to happen. But when patients were asked to listen to music, all they heard was a noise, a discordant jumble of sounds, a cacophony — the way the implants processed sounds did not enable them to reproduce music. One of our first patients, a classical music lover who had been deaf for about thirty years, admitted that for all those years his favourite Tchaikovsky melody had been running through his head. He had dreamed of being able to hear it with a cochlear implant, to enjoy it and to finally be free of the hallucination. And he was extremely disappointed when he did not recognize the tune! In time he learned to recognize it, but derived no pleasure from listening to music...

This is where perception of music differs from perception of speech. With speech the most important thing is the ability to discriminate sounds. When we listen to music, however, we endeavour not so much to recognize the tune (discrimination and recognition are very similar) as to obtain aesthetic enjoyment, an emotional impact. Achieving that is much more difficult.

The results of our research and world experience show that the old implants provided very limited possibilities for adequately conveying the melodic characteristics of musical signals, though the rhythmical pattern was well reproduced. Young people used to say: ‘On the second day after having the implant fitted I can hear a rhythm and dance to it, it’s great!’ But lovers of classical music, even those who had been wearing implants for a long time and understood speech well, screwed up their faces as if they had a toothache when they listened to music: the melodies were recognizable but out of tune.

In modern implants this discordance is eliminated by broadening the range of dynamics and frequency — a more precise processing of



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the signals' temporal characteristics. This means that all the components of the music can be conveyed with the use of special algorithms. Some models have different programmes for hearing speech and listening to music. Let us take an analogy: when we go to a concert or put on a favourite recording, we are attuned to appreciate music. In devising cochlear implantation systems the designers try to make them operate as closely as possible to the human ear.

The new possibilities of appreciating music also help our patients to perform it for the enjoyment of others. Many musicians suffering from impaired hearing have resumed their careers after receiving a cochlear implant.

The introduction of patients at the St. Petersburg Ear, Nose and Throat Research Institute to the world of music is based on a system of rehabilitation we have devised, making it easier for previously hearing patients to become accustomed to the new sound. We suggest they begin by listening to individual instruments rather than a full orchestra. Every

patient can choose an instrument or a tune that he or she likes best. We help them to choose well-known melodies — preferably with words, as there is a firm correlation between spoken and musical signals. We take into account the fact that male voices are perceived better than female ones. And so we gradually guide people to a harmonic perception of music. However, there is no doubt that classical music is more difficult to comprehend than music with a more pronounced rhythm such as rap or techno.

At our summer rehabilitation centre children and their parents enjoy doing exercises to music and going to discos in the evenings. They recognize and remember various tunes and move in accordance with their rhythm and words. Musical games, lessons and singing develop the children's hearing memory, the ability to control their voice and to imitate the movements of adults. This is very important for the child's mastery of speech, communication and general cognitive and emotional development. And the greatest thing is when parents realize that music is helping their child to be happy!

Music festival for children with hearing problems in Poland. 2015.  
Photo: the archive of the *I Hear the World!* Parents' Association.



# How Important it is to Hear the World

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THE PARENTS' ASSOCIATION PROTECTS THE INTERESTS OF CHILDREN, THE STATE AND SOCIETY

Arkady SOSNOV. Photo: Maria Istomina and the archive of the *I Hear the World!* Parents' Association



It is characteristic for parents of children with various ailments to join forces — their common misfortune brings them together. In St. Petersburg alone there are several associations for parents of children with hearing difficulties. One of them — *I Hear the World!* — is particularly active in the public domain, endeavouring to operate on a countrywide level (in Russia there is no national association for parents of children with impaired hearing). *I Hear the World!* is also the title of the programme the association is pursuing. So what came first: the programme or the organization?

— The programme came first — as a platform for our joint work, — says Dmitry KULIKOV, Head of the Association, recalling that in 2008 he suggested to the makers of the popular *Smeshariki* cartoon series that they invent another character who could help children with hearing difficulties to overcome their ailment. Together

they considered several alternatives until they came up with Usharik, the friend of all children with implants (*ushi* is Russian for *ears*).

Kulikov took Usharik with him to the St. Petersburg Ear, Nose and Throat Research Institute, whose specialists have developed an original method of hearing rehabilitation for children who have been given cochlear implants. They immediately took to the character. The Institute's method is based on a family-orientated approach. It has been said that parents can do much more than any specialist in the spontaneous development of their child's hearing and speech, creating an educational environment of communication. In order to do this, however, the parents also have a lot to learn. Usharik can act as a guide to the world of sounds, a constant companion in family sessions.

This led, with the support of philanthropists, to the *I Hear the World!* programme. A book was published telling the touching

“...harmony between state interests and social aspirations can be achieved...”

...children with hearing difficulties to overcome their ailment. Together



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story of Usharik, who has also had to undergo an operation and has learned to distinguish sounds and to speak. After that a cartoon was made about Usharik, presenting important information in an entertaining way: the structure of the ear, the operating principle of a cochlear implant and exercises in speech development. Sets of methodical programmes have been published for different age groups: babies, toddlers and schoolchildren. Olga Zontova, a specialist who organizes rehabilitation after cochlear implantation at the St. Petersburg Ear, Nose and Throat Research Institute, says that children immediately accept Usharik as one of them, whether as a cartoon character or as a life-size doll. By the way, the cartoon character was based on an actual child.

A logical continuation of the publishing activity was the launch of the *I Hear the World!* magazine, edited by Dmitry Kulikov. Half of the magazine (entitled *Usharik*) is aimed at children: comic strips, mazes, puzzles and games. The other half is for parents and specialists, featuring articles with the recommendations of professionals. The two parts form an integral whole — the entertaining half is beneficial and the beneficial half is entertaining. The magazine was launched last year and is distributed free of charge by subscription. Despite financial and personnel difficulties there have already been four issues and a fifth is currently being prepared for publication.

As a rule parents are behind undertakings in pursuit of a happy childhood — they are the prime movers. Not unusually, Dmitry Kulikov came to social work from the business world. Since 1990 he has been involved in the production and sale of medical equipment, and his attention was drawn to the emerging market for cochlear implants in Russia. After studying the interrelations between cochlear implant manufacturers, medical staff, social workers and families, he realized that the success of this progressive method of eliminating deafness depended mainly on an organized system of rehabilitation of hearing and speech. The vast majority of operations



are carried out in Moscow and St. Petersburg, but after the speech processors have been fitted the patients disperse to all corners of the country where there are frequently no adjustment specialists, surdologists or rehabilitation centres.

Kulikov is convinced that there should be a rehabilitation centre in every region, so that cochlear implant patients do not have to rush to Moscow or St. Petersburg to have their speech processors adjusted or for their hearing and speech development to be evaluated. These superfluous journeys are a burden on the state (if the rehabilitation is at state expense), troublesome for parents and undesirable for small children. Sooner or later there will be regional centres, but in the meantime the Association is attempting to encompass the whole country by means of monthly webinars on the subject of cochlear implantation. It holds training courses for regional specialists, helps to adjust processors via the Internet and provides individual assistance to families with children with hearing difficulties, including legal assistance...

Dmitry Kulikov with his beloved Usharik.

*Another feature of the I Hear the World! Association is its participation in advanced developments in its sphere of activity. Under the aegis of the Association a team of specialists is setting up a system of remote contact with patients, providing a stable link with the centre where the implant was carried out. This ensures control over the development of hearing and speaking skills.*

*In the same vein is the support of the Russian manufacturer of the Lira speech processor, which in some aspects is superior to imported devices. The subject is not currently fashionable, but is promising for the state: imported implants are fitted for life, but the processors that go with them have to be changed every five years. If they can be produced in Russia, the saving over the course of a patient's life will be enormous.*



The *I Hear the World!* Parents' Association.

*The cartoon lion cub not only appeals to children but has also provided an impulse to the Parents' Association. After all, one could simply have got the Mums and Dads together and suggested that they join forces, but it is not likely that the movement would have been successful without the programme and the various methods of rehabilitation.*

*On the other hand, the *I Hear the World!* programme, backed by the parents' alliance, has achieved a significant social status and is much in demand in the regions.*

— When people with implants are left to themselves, they lose heart — some even stop using the processor; — says Kulikov. — The result is that the state has spent money on an expensive operation to no purpose. The most difficult and vulnerable category of patients are children who are born deaf — they have to be taught from scratch. That is why, when we launched the *I Hear the World!* programme, we concentrated on the youngest children and their families — it was for them that Usharik was invented. (It should be noted that the ability of a public figure to see and formulate the interests of the state helps to open many doors).

Usharik is known in the Krasnodar, Stavropol, Altay, Khabarovsk, Sverdlovsk, Chelyabinsk, Novosibirsk, Rostov and Nizhny Novgorod Regions, the Republic of Tatarstan and other regions of Russia. He is also known in CIS countries. Similar parents' associations have been formed in a number of places.

*I Hear the World!* is a non-commercial partnership with no subscriptions — membership is free of charge. Becoming a member

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is very simple: all that is required is to register and complete the application form on the Association's website. All parents whose children have received a cochlear implant automatically become members of the Association (there are currently about 4,000 children with implants in Russia). Several hundred families are actually in contact. The main problem is distant communication, which is why meetings are held during summer health camps.

The idea of summer gatherings was tested seven years ago by the aforementioned Olga Zontova, before she became Deputy Head of the *I Hear the World!* programme. That year around thirty couples with their offspring gathered in the resort of Golubitskaya by the warm Azov Sea for a combination of holiday and rehabilitation. This format appealed to Kulikov and an implant manufacturer from Austria paid for specialists to attend a summer camp. In the course of two weeks the children have sessions with surdopedagogues, speech therapists and psychologists. The days also include games and amusements, physical exercises and speech exercises, invariably attended by Usharik. In parallel there are lessons for parents and seminars for regional rehabilitators. It is good for the participants to communicate in person, not just on the Internet. For other parents who may be depressed the fact that children of the same age as their own who underwent the same operation earlier can now hear and talk is a powerful source of optimism. 137 families took part in one of the summer camps!

Kulikov jokes that membership of the Association provides parents with everything except material assistance, but even that depends how you look at it. They have obtained discounts from companies providing post-guarantee supply of spare parts for cochlear implantation systems. They have entered into a contract with a service centre to create a reserve of replacement processors — they are supplied free of charge when a processor has to be repaired, so the child is not cut off from the outside world. Last summer a five year-old lost his processor at an airport. His parents applied to the





A summer rehabilitation camp is a combination of various activities: sessions with the children, lessons for their parents, adjustment of speech processors and seminars for regional specialists. And all this without disrupting rest and relaxation.





Overcoming loss of hearing as an obstacle to communication is the mission of the Austrian MED-EL company. In 1977 the company's founders, Ingeborg and Erwin Hochmair, developed the world's first multichannel cochlear implant.

*The device, which transforms sounds into electrical signals, has helped tens of thousands of people with hearing loss to hear birdsong, laughter and the speech of those around them... MED-EL has continued its scientific research in the restoration of hearing. There are various causes of loss of hearing, so five types of implants have been developed: vibration, bone conduction, cochlear, brainstem and electro-acoustic stimulation. The company is a partner of the I Hear the World! Parents' Association.*

Source: [www.medel.com](http://www.medel.com)

**Right:** Olga Zontova carries out a pedagogical consultation on a child's hearing and speaking development after a cochlear implant. It is commendable that her father has accompanied her to the session — he will derive great benefit from it!

*I Hear the World!* office and received a replacement from the reserve. And there was another case where a patient's house burned down with everything in it, and he was simply given the money for a processor.

However, there are also systematic achievements to the benefit of the young patients. For instance, the approximate life of a speech processor is five years. When a processor is coming to the end of its life, the patient loses his hearing and speaking skills and the rehabilitation he has received counts for nothing. Everyone knew about this, including manufacturers and officials, but no period for replacement was specified.

— In 2015 we, together with the *Zdorovye (Health)* Foundation and other social organizations, raised the question of the planned replacement of speech processors five years after they are installed at the *For Russia* All-Russian People's Front, — says Dmitry Kulikov. — As a result of our combined efforts this period was regulated by order of the Ministry of Health, and free mass replacement of processors began in the capitals and in the regions.

But that was only half of the story. The guarantee period for speech processors was still three years. So what if processors broke down before the planned replacement period? Patients had to repair or replace them at their own expense. For information: a processor costs between 250,000 and 750,000 roubles, depending on the manufacturer. The batteries have to be changed every year (10,000 roubles a set) and the cost of cables varies from 3,000 to 11,000 roubles. In the case of binaural implants (in both ears) these amounts are doubled. All this is an unavoidable and most frequently unforeseen expense for the family budget. This is why the Parents' Association sent letters to the main state customers: set a condition for participants in the tender concerning the five-year guarantee period for speech processors!

It is typical that the only responses to this demand came from partners of the St. Petersburg Ear, Nose and Throat Research Institute. Other customers ignored the letter. The explanation

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Kulikov was given was that the state had no right to dictate conditions to suppliers, still less to foreign companies. He was obliged to apply to the Presidential Administration. As a result, the Ministry of Health called on all state customers to include in their auction documentation the requirement for a five-year guarantee on speech processors for cochlear implantation systems. 'A very correct decision on a national scale in the interests of patients,' wrote *I Hear the World!* magazine.

There is still more to be done. Speech processors are becoming smaller and smaller for reasons of comfort and aesthetics. And what can you tell parents to do if their child drops, damages or loses such an expensive 'toy' — save up and find sponsors? The civilized solution to this problem is insurance. For instance, in Austria — the birthplace of cochlear implantation, where the system costs 7,500 Euros — the annual premium is a quite acceptable 150–200 Euros. There are Russian patients who could afford that sum, but our insurance companies are not prepared to cover the risk. After failing to find common ground



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with them, the enterprising Kulikov is, as usual, seeking allies in various fields. If market mechanisms cannot come up with the goods, he tries to get administrative resources involved — all in the patients' interests.

Interaction with business is difficult for any social organization. And the fact that it is helping to improve children's health and make it possible for them to live a normal life does not, alas, make the task any easier. The principal philanthropist of the Parents' Association is a socially oriented company making devices for the restoration of hearing. Of course this is not the banking or oil business, but the Association's common aims with the company and with medical staff enable it to provide genuine assistance to couples whose children have cochlear implants. Other companies' donations are of a one-off character. Kulikov is hoping to attract Russian businesses to take part in the *I Hear the World!* programme. It will not involve large injections of money, but will help to create a little miracle: a child will be able to hear and speak. And participation in this miracle will improve any company's image...

In the time that he has headed the Association Dmitry Kulikov has sensed the difference between doctors and medical officials. He does not always understand the logic of the latter. It would seem that both he and they are acting in the interests of the state, but understand it in different ways (Kulikov is confident in his own understanding, as he has contact with numerous patients and also maintains links with the business world).

Nevertheless, the history of cochlear implantation in Russia, for which the Ministry of Health must take great credit, is proof that harmony between state interests and social aspirations can be achieved. An example of this harmony is the *So-edinenie* support foundation for the deaf-blind, whose board of trustees includes members of the country's political and business elite. The *I Hear the World!* Parents' Association is a body of a different kind. It is opening up the potential of a small social organization which has no influential patrons but, perhaps because of this, is dynamic and effective.



Vera and Mikhail Kelim have two daughters — six year-old Serafima and two year-old Maryana. The elder girl was born with heart disease, and as a result of treatment for that she rapidly began to lose her hearing.

Without waiting for an implant her parents started having sessions with a surdologist at the Early Intervention Institute when Serafima was nine months old. At the age of fifteen months she was fitted with an implant in one ear, and a year later in the other ear. Thanks to the persistent efforts of the teachers and her parents Sima quickly

mastered speaking skills. It then became clear that those pre-emptive sessions had helped! The girl is a little energizer, speaks fluently, reads, plays with her sister and babysits one year-old Frosya.

Her rapid rehabilitation is down to her progressive mother. Vera is a professional psychologist who runs training courses for parents whose children suffer from impaired hearing as part of the *I Hear the World!* programme. Psychological help for mothers and fathers who have been under stress for a lengthy period is no less important than sessions with children.





# The Benefit of Donations

THE 11TH PHILANTHROPIST DAY WAS HELD  
IN THE STATE HERMITAGE

Photo: Evgeny Sinyaver, Oxana Solovyeva

