

STAGE RUSSIA HD PRESENTS

BORIS



A **Dmitry Krymov & Leonid Roberman** Project in participation with the Museum of Moscow
Based on the play *Boris Godunov* by Alexander Pushkin

THE GENERAL PLOT OF ALEXANDER PUSHKIN'S "BORIS GODUNOV"

The story of the play is based on events that took place in Russian history. At the time, the Russian people were ruled by a tsar. The previous tsar, Ivan IV, known as "Ivan the Terrible", was terribly cruel and the Russian people suffered greatly under his rule. When he finally died, his son, Fyodor, became Tsar, but he was claimed to be mentally ill, so a group of powerful people including Boris Godunov chose to rule on his behalf. Ivan also had another son, Dmitry, who had mysteriously disappeared. He was almost certainly killed, and Boris Godunov, who wanted to become tsar himself, had probably ordered the murder. Boris then cleverly but easily persuaded the Russian people that they should choose him to be their tsar.

Some years later, a young monk escapes from his monastery and pretends to be the murdered son of Ivan the Terrible. He gets a Polish army to help him to fight Boris Godunov. Overcome with guilt and paranoia, Boris suffers greatly and eventually dies. The young monk arrives in Moscow and makes himself tsar (Tsar Dimitri II). The ordinary Russian people remain desperately poor. It is their fate to suffer and be ruled by cruel tyrants.

KRYMOV'S "BORIS"



Dmitry Krymov's production deconstructs and compresses the action of Pushkin's story into a single day. Boris is about to ascend the throne and a concert has been organized in his honor. Typecasts of modern Russia - boyars (officials), "priests" of beaux arts (pianists and singers), and a holy fool

(a bohemian poet) - obsequiously seek to entertain and please their new leader. The concert concludes when Boris meets his tragic end. This ironic theatrical collage is performed on the premises of the Museum of Moscow, which also provided the production with artifacts from the times of Ivan the Terrible and Boris Godunov. History becomes tangible, when, on Pushkin's line "Now let us go, bow to the coffins /The reposed rulers of Russia", real coffins are brought onto the stage. But for Krymov, much more important than bringing together stinking antiquity and the

foul-smelling reality of today is the meeting of authentic museum items with obvious theatrical props, leaving you with the feeling that the director wants primarily to teach us to distinguish the real from the fake and to unmask the many simulacra of the reality of Russia today.

KRYMOV ON THE THEATRICAL SPACE UTILIZED IN "BORIS"

"I do not know what was previously stored in the Provision Warehouses where the Museum of Moscow is now located, but back in Soviet times there was a General Staff garage, a stable of government cars, the so-called "member-mobiles" - huge black limousines that sometimes rushed along the streets of Moscow with enchanting speed. They were repaired, as it turns out, quite prosaically, in this exact space. Eight or nine years ago I was in one of the rooms of this amazing building, built in the middle of the 19th century in the Empire style by the architect Stasov, and saw on the floor puddles of not yet dried machine oil, attached to inscriptions on the walls: "Carburetor Repair", "Waste Oil Drain Point" and the like. The government geldings, as it turned out (I almost said "there were people, too!"), consisted of the same parts and were susceptible to the same diseases as our poor Zhiguli, Moskvitch and Zaporozhets. I remember these puddles of thick machine oil on the floor of this huge space, similar to puddles of black blood, drained many years ago from the heavy carcasses of these government monsters. I still remember thinking: these cars no longer roam the roads and side streets, but their blood - here it is, here, on the ground, beneath my feet, and it never dries out. There was something even mystical about it. In general, I see no reason not to stage Pushkin's *Boris Godunov* in this space with Timofey Tribuntsev in the title role, Mikhail Filippov as Shuisky and Viktoriya Isakova as Mnishkek. After all, Pushkin's *Boris Godunov* is about the fact that though a person may no longer be here, his blood remains and doesn't go anywhere."

ABOUT STAGE RUSSIA HD

Stage Russia is an intercultural project that films performances presented by the finest theater companies in Russia and distributes them in HD, translated and subtitled, into cinemas and arts centers across the globe. For more information on Stage Russia and our upcoming films this season visit www.stagerussia.com.