Russian Garden Gazette
A Digital Journal of the Russian Cultural Garden, Cleveland
ISSUE #24 · NOVEMBER 2026

🇺🇸 **English** | 🇷🇺 Русский



Russian Garden Gazette

A Digital Journal of the Russian Cultural Garden, Cleveland

Real or Imaginary?

Lomonosov · Konstantin Sonin · Pelevin · Plisetskaya · Karlsson

ISSUE #24 · NOVEMBER 19, 2026

Real or Imaginary?

This issue brings together people and characters who blur the line between the real and the imaginary. A fisherman's son whose life reads like a fairy tale. An economist who has spent his life studying "the history of now." A writer who exists for his readers almost entirely as a legend. A ballerina who turned into a swan before the audience's eyes. And a little man with a propeller whom one American critic dismissed as a figment — and whom generations of Soviet children took to be absolutely real.

“The Arkhangelsk Peasant”: Mikhail Lomonosov at 315

On November 19 — the day this issue comes out — the man Pushkin called “our first university” was born

On November 19, 1711, in the village of Mishaninskaya near Kholmogory, in Russia’s far north, a son, Mikhail, was born to the Pomor fisherman Vasily Lomonosov. This issue of the Gazette comes out 315 years later to the day, and we could not let the date pass.

His life reads like a fairy tale, but it is that rare tale backed by documents. In the winter of 1730, the nineteen-year-old left home, followed a caravan of fish carts and made his way to Moscow on foot. To enter the Slavic-Greek-Latin Academy, he hid his peasant origins: peasant children were not supposed to study there. He sat in class with little boys, lived half-starved, and in his first year passed through three grades.



M. V. Lomonosov. Portrait after Georg Kaspar Prenner, frontispiece from Alexander Smith's book (The Century Company, New York). Public domain. Courtesy of Science History Institute.

Then came St. Petersburg; Marburg, where he studied with the philosopher Christian Wolff; and the mining school in Freiberg. In 1745, Lomonosov became the first Russian professor of chemistry at the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences.

After that, it is hard to find a field where he did not leave his mark. He built Russia's first chemistry laboratory and was among the first to formulate the law of conservation of matter. Watching the transit of Venus across the Sun in 1761, he discovered that Venus has an atmosphere. He revived the forgotten art of mosaic: his *Battle of Poltava* still adorns the Academy of Sciences building in St.

Petersburg. He wrote the *Russian Grammar*, reformed Russian versification and composed odes that generations learned by heart.

And in 1755, on his initiative and with the support of Ivan Shuvalov, Moscow University was founded. Today it bears Lomonosov's name, and in the interview that follows, Konstantin Sonin recalls his student years in its mathematics department.

Pushkin said it best:

> *"He founded our first university. Better to say, he himself was our first university."*
>
> ALEXANDER PUSHKIN

In an ode of 1747, Lomonosov expressed the hope that the Russian land would yet give the world "its own Platos and quick-witted Newtons." He himself was the first proof.

A Few Questions for a Distinguished Russian-American Economist

Konstantin Sonin, PhD — University of Chicago

Interview by Dr. Boris Vinogradsky



Konstantin Sonin. Photo: Saule Tuganbaeva/Chicago.

BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Born in Moscow in 1972. Graduated from School 57 in 1989. Defended a PhD thesis in mathematics (abstract algebra) at Moscow State University in 1998. Before joining the

University of Chicago in 2015, served on the faculty and as a vice-president of the New Economic School (2001–2013) and the Higher School of Economics (2013–2015) in Moscow. Over two decades, guest-lectured in dozens of universities, summer schools, and high schools across Russia and worked part-time as a teacher in School 57.

At the University of Chicago, he is the John Dewey Distinguished Service Professor at the Irving B. Harris Graduate School of Public Policy Studies. Since 2023, he has also taught game theory and microeconomics, on a visiting basis, at the Kyiv School of Economics in Kyiv, Ukraine. In April 2027, the University of Chicago Press will publish his new book, "How Revolutions Happen."

> *Does anything connect you to Cleveland?*

Cleveland is one of our favorite US cities, culturally and personally. Our daughter Polina and her husband Sam live in Cleveland; Polina studies for a master's degree in biochemistry at Case Western Reserve University; Sam teaches at a high school. Our lifelong friends Zhenya and Vanya Soprunovs live in Cleveland; they both are professors of mathematics.

> *1. What inspired you to become an economist, and which of your professional achievements are you most proud of?*

As a kid, I was good at math but mostly interested in history. But the kind of history that I liked the most was what I thought of as "the history of now". I did not know the words "political science" or "political economy" then, but if I had, I probably wouldn't have liked what came under these names in the Soviet Union. I remember reading Yevgeny Tarle's "Napoleon", William Manchester's "The Death of a President", Vladimir Bukovsky's "To Build a Castle: My Life as a Dissenter" and Robert Conquest's "The Great Terror" about Stalin – and this was the most interesting of all. Many years later, tools of the economics profession – formal models and data analysis – help me explore and understand politics.

I am a chaired professor at the University of Chicago, perhaps the most important university in economic science in the world. Before leaving Russia, sort of involuntary, I was the best published and cited Russian economist (and maybe in all social sciences). That's certainly more than I could have hoped for at the beginning of my academic career. In Russia, I also tried to be a public intellectual as an economist, but this part has largely failed; in 2023, I wrote a short essay about this failure.

> *2. Why do economists so frequently disagree, even when examining the same economic data?*

Applied economists are very much like doctors – they agree on a great deal of things, many of which have become routine. (Like doctors do with many standard methods, tools, drugs, etc.) Economists sometimes disagree about "big questions", but this is normal. (Ask several doctors – What makes a human healthy? – they would probably disagree on what is most important.) Problems that economists are dealing with are sometimes very complex – for example, it's impossible to do an experiment in macroeconomics (who'd agree to be the control sample?). And of course, any system with feedback is inherently more complex than systems in natural sciences.

> *3. Will AI revolutionize economic research and policymaking, and eventually replace economists?*

No question that AI dramatically enhances research capabilities. In empirical analysis, in theoretical work – everywhere. Would this technological breakthrough be bigger than, say, the arrival of big computers 70 years ago or personal computers 50 years ago? I do not know.

"Irreversible damage? Probably not. Very significant damage? Yes, definitely."

> *4. What prompted you to leave Russia, and have you ever regretted that decision?*

Quite frankly, I cannot say that I moved to Chicago in 2015 exclusively because of political reasons – the University of Chicago is the center of the universe for an economist; I was joining the top place in my field of study. At the same time, the occupation of Crimea in 2014 – and the way many people in Moscow were happy about this – made life there uncomfortable. Also, I was fired as a vice-president of HSE University, one of the largest and best universities in Russia, for political reasons. So, I moved to Chicago because it's the best place on Earth to work as an economist, but I started to look for a job abroad for political reasons.

Before the war, we travelled back to Moscow for 2-4 months every year, so we sort of lived in two countries at the same time. In June 2021, we went to Moscow for 1.5 years of my sabbatical but had to flee after Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022. Two weeks into the war, it became clear that it is dangerous to stay there – especially, when they criminalized past social media writings, even five years old. No, I have never regretted leaving Russia.

> *5. What did your Russian or Soviet education give you that Western could not?*

I do not think there was something especially good about Soviet education. A lot of success in mathematics, physics, and medicine happened because the Soviet system basically forced every talented kid to go to these fields. Most

walks of life, in science, arts, business, all kinds of creative activity were effectively banned in the Soviet Union. The flipside of that was a huge surplus of talented kids in a limited number of scientific fields.

The education, certainly at the university level, was organized based on this huge surplus of talent. When I was a student at the Math Department at the MSU, it operated like – select 450 talented kids from a big country, teach them so half of them would not understand, but filter 50 for a PhD program, which will filter it further to 10 top talents. American math departments, in the same period, had to compete for kids with finance, all kinds of entrepreneurship, business, statistics, arts, etc. And, in the final analysis, you cannot say that American or French mathematicians have done less in the 20th century than Soviet ones.

My graduation year in my Moscow high school, School 57, was perhaps stronger than in any high school that year – and maybe ever. It produced brilliant mathematicians and theoretical physicists. In the US, it is impossible to get so many mathematically talented kids in the same class because the education is organized differently. (Not all talented people in the country are brought together in one or two cities; not all kids in these one or two cities are brought together in a couple of high schools.) Of course, in Soviet times, these mathematical high schools were at the same time a shelter for kids with Jewish roots, who were discriminated by antisemitic Soviet authorities, as well as for all kinds of kids that we now call neurodivergent.

> *6. Can economic research ever be truly independent of politics, ideology, money and personal ambition?*

Could any research be independent of all these things? A lot of great discoveries, in all sciences, have been made by people driven by personal ambition or by all kinds of sinister goals. Nations with imperial ambitions

invested in technology development for their military purposes. In biomedicine, a lot of inventions were made in search of profit. Discoveries in applied statistics were made by ideologists of eugenics. Economists are not that different from other natural scientists in this respect.

> *7. Have you personally experienced censorship, political pressure, or attempts to influence your economic conclusions?*

In Russia, I lost (part of) my job for political reasons, my column in a major newspaper was terminated because of censorship, most of the media for which I contributed were closed down by authorities, and I was sentenced to 8.5 years (in absentia) for my social media posts about atrocities committed by Russian occupying forces in Ukrainian cities of Bucha and Mariupol. So, yes to this question.

> *8. Why has Russia, despite its enormous natural resources and intellectual potential, struggled to build a diversified and prosperous economy?*

Daron Acemoglu, my coauthor, and Jim Robinson, my colleague at the University of Chicago Harris School, won the Nobel Prize in 2024 for explaining how countries waste enormous resources and human potential. Their popular book “Why Nations Fail” offers a good explanation of how Russia failed, as a nation and as a state, in the 21st century. The first edition did not contain a chapter on Russia, but if the authors rewrite the book in the future, Russia will provide a solid illustration of their central explanation how countries stagnate and fail.

> *9. Has the emigration of Russia’s intellectual and professional elite caused irreversible damage to its economic future?*

Irreversible damage? Probably not. Very significant damage? Yes, definitely. Compare the story of the emigration of the leading German scientists after Hitler's ascent to power in 1933. By 1935, years before Kristallnacht, the war, concentration camps and gas chambers, Hitler obliterated German science, the best science in the world at that time. Nowadays Germany has excellent scientific schools, universities, etc., but it has never restored the preeminence it had before Hitler. The same thing with Putin's impact on Russian science. Putin is no Hitler, and Russian science before the war was not the best in the world. Still, the war against Ukraine and political repression was such a blow to Russian science and education that it will take decades to recover, if ever.

> *10. Can meaningful economic cooperation between Russia and the West survive the current reality?*

That depends on Russia in the first place. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia has received an enormous amount of help from the West. Hundreds of millions of dollars in direct help, billions in investment, many billions in trade opportunities, technology transfers etc. Yet it has not generated deep interest in cooperation with the West. Right now, it became a policy – again and again, the Russian state was blocking opportunities for people and business to reap the benefits of international trade, technology exchange, etc. When the present regime ends, it will be a choice for the new government – to return to international cooperation, trade, etc. – or to choose the path of the Soviet autocratic stagnation.

> *11. Do you have a hero or a role model?*

Trivial, from my childhood years – Petrusha Grinev from Alexander Pushkin's "The Captain's Daughter" and Sanya Grigoriev from Veniamin Kaverin's "Two Captains" among literary heroes. Of real people, perhaps Winston Churchill.

As a kid, I admired Napoleon, but now I think Alexander Hamilton was a more consequential historical figure. But Churchill is still up there.

12. Which living person do you most despise?

Perhaps the choice is obvious. It's a Russian tragedy – a random person, with average intelligence, subpar communication skills, poor memory, and thuggish sense of humor became a leader responsible for consequential decisions. Perhaps average intelligence might be fine – it happens to leaders, but he lacks any kind of moral core and has never shown any interest in anything except power and money. His fake Christianity is just a cherry on top. A despicable human being and a gross failure as the leader of a great country.

13. What is the quality you most like in a man or a woman?

I don't think that being a man or being a woman or being non-binary is the most important characteristic of a person. Personal integrity is far more important for me.

Actually, many things are more important to me in a person than the person's gender identity. I try to talk to smart people, to play games – football or board games – with fun people. Thankfully, I know a lot of people who are smart, beautiful, love history, football, theater, movies, etc.

14. If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?

I've never played football competitively. In fact, never played 11 on 11 on a real field, in any kind of organized way. But I love to play football. So, if I can improve my skills with the ball, if possible, it will be great.

15. What do you think about death?

I fear death, in a normal sort of way.

16. Do you have a motto?

Alfred Tennyson's "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield." If you have seen the film "The Odyssey," it draws as much on Tennyson's poem, which ends with these words, as on Homer's ancient epic.

EDITORIAL NOTES

- Biographical sketch and question 7. The University of Chicago confirms Sonin's academic position, his teaching at the Kyiv School of Economics, and the eight-and-a-half-year prison sentence handed down in absentia in May 2024. The profile also mentions his posts about Bucha. University of Chicago profile.
- A timeline of Russia's 2014 occupation of Crimea and its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 is given in the U.S. State Department report.
- Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson wrote "Why Nations Fail." They shared the 2024 economics prize with Simon Johnson. Official prize announcement.
- The interview refers to Adolf Hitler, who was appointed Chancellor of Germany on January 30, 1933. U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.
- Petrusha Grinev is the hero of Alexander Pushkin's "The Captain's Daughter"; Sanya Grigoriev is the hero of Veniamin Kaverin's novel "The Two Captains." The motto comes from the closing line of Alfred Tennyson's poem "Ulysses".
- The same line, in Russian «Бороться и искать, найти и не сдаваться», is the motto of Kaverin's "The Two Captains" — so the hero of Sonin's childhood and his motto come from the same book.

Who Controls Reality? Victor Pelevin and the Economy of Illusion

For the 64th birthday of a writer who manages to be present in literature while practically absent from public life

On November 22, Victor Pelevin turns 64. We could mark the occasion with an interview and ask the writer about his plans, his favorite books and what he thinks of artificial intelligence.

We could. If we could find him.

Pelevin long ago turned his own absence into a literary genre. He almost never appears in public, rarely gives interviews and skips the usual literary ceremonies. Yet his books keep coming out, and readers keep arguing about where the author ends and the legend around him begins.

Then again, Pelevin's absence from public life may well be his most successful advertising campaign.

Which brings us to economics.

Selling people what they didn't know they wanted

In 1999, Pelevin published the novel *Generation "П"* (in English: *Homo Zapiens* in the US, *Babylon* in the UK). Its hero, Vavilen Tatarsky, starts out as a poet and ends up in advertising. Soviet reality has vanished, the old ideals have lost their value, and new deities have moved into the empty space: brands.

Tatarsky learns the trade fast. He sells not so much products as reasons why people should want them.

Sneakers promise freedom. A car promises superiority. A drink promises membership among the chosen few. The product itself is almost beside the point. What matters is convincing the buyer that along with it he will acquire a better version of himself.

The trick has one unpleasant catch: the promised happiness exists mostly in the ad. The store doesn't hand it out, even if you show the receipt.

Pelevin caught something important about the economy of Russia's new capitalism. Advertising stopped being simply a way to tell people about a product. It became a factory of desires, and then a factory of ideas about the world.

In the novel, things go even further: television technology makes it possible not only to advertise things but to construct political reality. If viewers see an event on the screen, does it really need to have happened?

In 1999, this looked like fantastic grotesque. Today, when artificial intelligence can create convincing images and voices of real people, the question sounds a little less fantastic.

The customer who works for free

Economists have long studied why people buy not only useful things but also social status, prestige and a sense of belonging to a particular group.

But the digital age has produced another curious arrangement.

We don't just watch ads. We feed the advertising system information about ourselves: what we read, where our eyes linger, what delights us, what frightens

us. Our attention becomes a commodity, and our behavior becomes the raw material for producing it.

What's more, we spread the messages ourselves, join the arguments, create content and draw other viewers to it.

Vavilen Tatarsky was paid to manufacture advertising illusions. Today's social-media user often does part of the same work completely free.

And is sure he is just relaxing.

Günther Anders and the mass hermits

Here Pelevin has an unexpected meeting with the German philosopher Günther Anders, whom we wrote about in Issue 20 of the Gazette.

Back in the mid-20th century, Anders was thinking about how television changes our relationship with reality. He offered a paradoxical image, the "mass hermits": people sit alone in front of their screens, yet all of them take in the same images and messages at the same time.

They are physically apart, but their experiences are mass-produced.

Pelevin seems to look behind Anders's screen and find an advertising agency there.

In Anders, a person gradually loses direct contact with the world and receives a ready-made picture of it instead. In Pelevin, it turns out that the picture can be ordered, manufactured, sold and, with a big enough budget, declared the only reality.

Of course, we are not claiming that Anders demonstrably influenced Pelevin. What is more interesting is that a philosopher of postwar Europe and a Russian

writer of the era of primitive capital accumulation came at the same problem from different sides.

What happens to a person when a screen appears between him and the world?

And now that the screen fits in a pocket, we can ask that question around the clock.

Pelevin's most successful ad campaign

There is one more irony.

The writer who so convincingly exposed the machinery of image-making has himself become one of the most mysterious images in contemporary Russian literature.

Almost no public appearances. Rare interviews. Few biographical details. Each new book sets off another round of discussion, not only about the book but about the author himself.

In other words, Pelevin has built a highly recognizable literary brand while taking practically no part in promoting it.

Perhaps it is a deliberate strategy. Perhaps he simply likes solitude. We don't know, and we won't pass off guesses as biographical fact.

But the result is remarkable: in an age when fame demands constant presence, Pelevin achieved it through almost complete absence.

So on November 22, we wish Victor Olegovich a happy birthday. And perhaps we won't insist that he appear before the public.

After all, if the author of *Generation "П"* suddenly came out to meet the press and began explaining who he really is, readers would ask a thoroughly Pelevinian question:

Who can guarantee this isn't a commercial?

Maya Plisetskaya: Eternal Flight

November 20 marks 101 years since the birth of the great ballerina

Maya Plisetskaya was born in Moscow on November 20, 1925. For almost half a century, from 1943 to 1990, she danced on the stage of the Bolshoi Theatre, and for millions of people around the world her name came to mean Russian ballet itself.



Maya Plisetskaya in Carmen Suite, 1974. Photographer unknown. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

Her life was no fairy tale. In 1938, her father was shot, her mother was sent to a labor camp, and the girl was taken in by her aunt, the ballerina Sulamith Messerer. For years, Plisetskaya was not allowed to travel abroad. But on stage, she was freer than anyone.

Her *Dying Swan*, to the music of Saint-Saëns, seemed less a dance than a miracle: her arms turn into wings, and you can no longer tell where the woman ends and the bird begins. Her Carmen in the 1967 *Carmen Suite*, set to Bizet's music as arranged by her husband, Rodion Shchedrin, so outraged officials that the ballet was nearly banned. And she kept on dancing: she was still taking the stage at seventy.

Let us remember Maya Mikhailovna together.

Maya Plisetskaya. (youtube.com/watch?v=aTuWJ6xaIDM)

STARS OF SUMMER

A Season of Gratitude: a Stars of Summer Concert

On Sunday, November 29, at 1:15 PM, the Stars of Summer Master Agency invites you to St. Casimir Church for a special concert, *A Season of Gratitude*. It is the competition's way of thanking everyone who makes it possible: sponsors, organizers, teachers, parents and, of course, the participants themselves.

The program features music by Chopin, Tchaikovsky, Prokofiev and Copland, performed by winners of the competition's special prizes: Polish, Russian, Italian, MusiCats, Ukrainian and Grand Prix. Dr. Binienda, Co-Chair of the Ohio Chopin Institute, will also give an original performance.

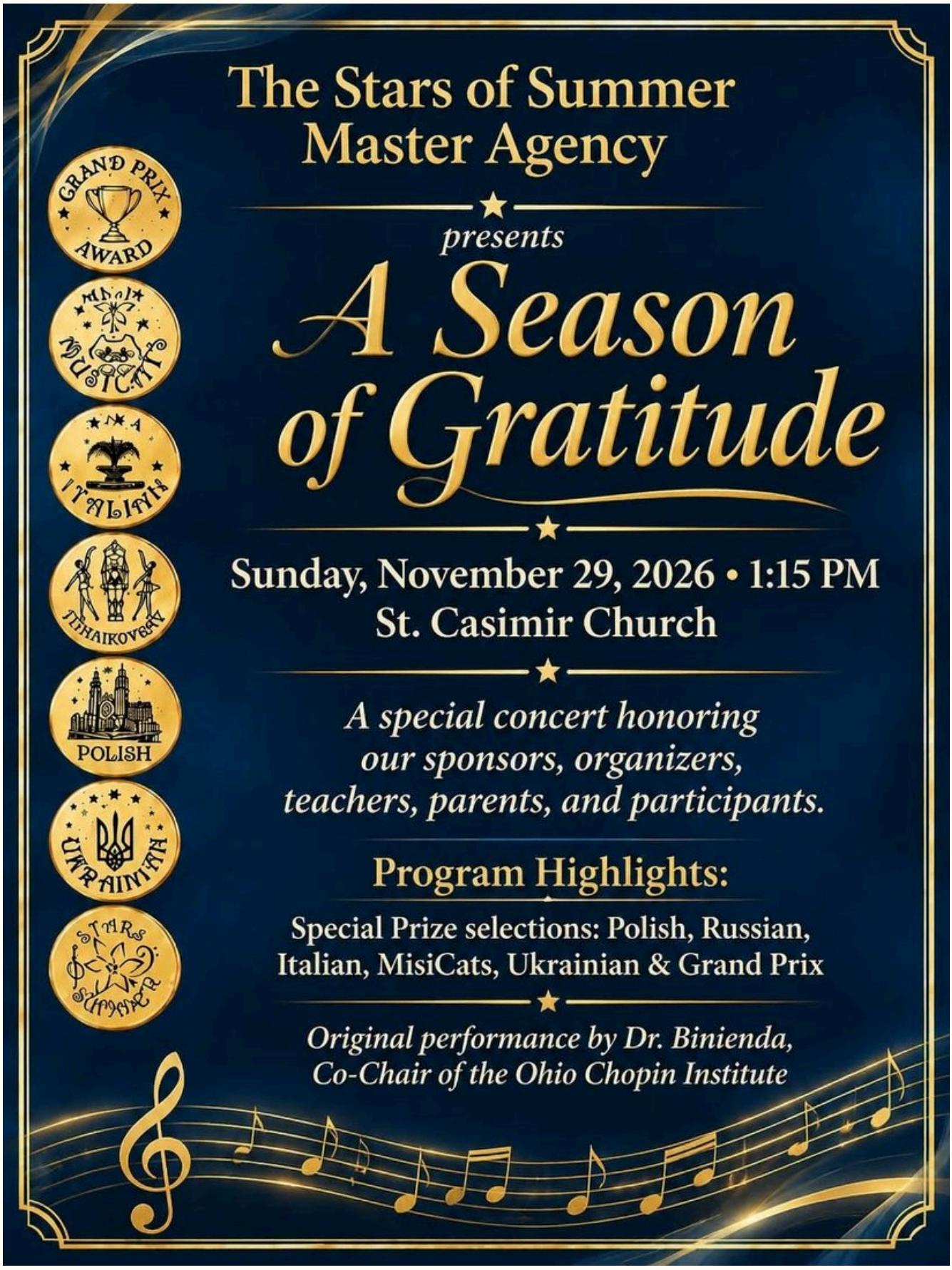
THE CONCERT

Sunday, November 29, 2026 · 1:15 PM
DATE AND TIME

St. Casimir Church
8223 SOWINSKI AVENUE, CLEVELAND, OH 44103

Chopin · Tchaikovsky · Prokofiev · Copland
MUSIC

We look forward to seeing you!



Concert poster.

Two Karlssons, Two Destinies

How Karlsson failed to win over America
but became a Hero of the Soviet Union

In November 1971, the American magazine *Kirkus Reviews* reviewed Astrid Lindgren's *Karlsson-on-the-Roof*, which had just come out in the United States. The reviewer had little sympathy for the hero: a braggart, a glutton, an endless source of trouble. And he ended almost mercilessly: "Figment or flesh, he won't be missed."

Won't be missed?!

Why, he's a man in his prime! The world's best steam-engine expert, the world's best tamer of house-dragons and, of course, the world's best jam-eater!

Then again, Karlsson himself would hardly have been upset by an American review. "Nothing to it — happens all the time!"

By then he had settled firmly in the Soviet Union, where people loved him for exactly what annoyed the American critic: his self-confidence, his boundless boasting, his endless imagination and his complete unwillingness to answer for the consequences of his pranks.

How did one literary hero come to live two such different lives?

An American relative?

This story has an unexpected American branch.

Back in 1942, the artist Crockett Johnson created the comic strip *Barnaby*. In it, a little boy is visited by Mr. O'Malley, a flying fairy godfather with tiny wings, a big ego and very modest magical abilities. He promises miracles but more often causes trouble.

Remarkably like Karlsson, isn't it?



Crockett Johnson. Barnaby, Sunday page, 1948. Mr. O'Malley, the fairy godfather, offers to show Barnaby how it's done on a sled — with the expected result.

Whether Astrid Lindgren knew the American comic is unknown. But Karlsson did have another, well-documented literary predecessor: Mr. Lilyvale (Herr Liljonkvast), a kindly flying little man from Lindgren's own story "In the Land of Twilight" (1949).

Karlsson arrived in 1955: far noisier, more self-absorbed and less predictable. And, importantly, with a motor of his own.

Karlsson gets his Soviet papers

Karlsson flew into the Soviet Union surprisingly fast, just two years after the first Swedish book. In 1957, Lilianna Lungina's Russian translation came out, and the little man with the propeller began speaking a language that suited him remarkably well.

Lungina did not try to reform Karlsson. He stayed a braggart, a glutton and an incorrigible egoist. But his self-confidence sounded so infectious that readers happily forgave him any prank.

As early as 1958, Karlsson appeared in a radio play, voiced by Nikolai Litvinov. In 1968, Spartak Mishulin's Karlsson took the stage at the Moscow Satire Theatre: a big mischievous child, funny, touching and utterly disobedient. Mishulin played him for decades, and for several generations of theatergoers he was the real Karlsson.

But the hero had yet to meet the people who would make him practically immortal.

A man in his prime

In 1968, director Boris Stepantsev released the animated film *The Kid and Karlsson*, and two years later, *Karlsson Returns*. Artist Anatoly Savchenko created that very round little man with red hair, a sly smile and a propeller on his back.

But the real wonder began when the characters started to talk.

Vasily Livanov gave Karlsson his inimitable husky voice and the intonation of someone absolutely sure of his own genius. As the actor recalled, Karlsson's voice was a good-natured parody of the film director Grigory Roshal. Roshal took no offense and once even signed a congratulatory telegram "Roshal, who lives on the roof."

Klara Rumyanova voiced the Kid, a kind, trusting boy who badly needs a friend. Her gentle, slightly sad voice was the perfect counterweight to Karlsson's smugness. After all, without the Kid, whom would Karlsson tell about his countless virtues?

And in the second film came Faina Ranevskaya, and Freken Bok instantly turned from a strict housekeeper into a star in her own right. Her indignant "And here we are, you know, treating ourselves to buns!" became one of the best-known lines in Soviet animation.

That is another wonderful thing about the Soviet Karlsson: audiences loved more than just the hero. Even the fearsome house-dragon earned her own share of affection.

"Calm, just stay calm!" Karlsson commanded. "Nothing to it — happens all the time!" he explained after each new disaster. And viewers repeated his lines without ever thinking they were quoting a Swedish children's tale.

From Boris Stepantsev's animated films about Karlsson. (youtube.com/watch?v=NiYj3uD8vic&t=564s)

Is happiness not in pies?

In America, Karlsson never became nearly as popular. Americans already knew another Lindgren heroine, Pippi Longstocking. And the little man

with the propeller never got his own Livanov, his own Ranevskaya or his own Savchenko.

In the Soviet Union, things went differently. Lungina taught Karlsson to speak Russian, Mishulin brought him to the stage, Savchenko drew him, Stepantsev brought him to life, and wonderful actors gave him voices that have outlived more than one generation of viewers.

November 14 marked the 119th anniversary of Astrid Lindgren's birth. Happy birthday to the wonderful writer who gave the world Pippi Longstocking, Emil of Lönneberga, Ronia the Robber's Daughter and, of course, our beloved Karlsson!



Astrid Lindgren. Photographer unknown, from Astrids bilder. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

And what is a birthday without a birthday cake? Everyone is invited to the festive table! And let's not argue with Karlsson, who knew perfectly well what really matters in life:

“Believe me, Karlsson, happiness isn’t in pies…”
“Are you out of your mind? Where else would it be?”

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

NOVEMBER 26 · THANKSGIVING

A Special Thanksgiving Issue

Our next issue comes out on November 26, Thanksgiving Day, and will be devoted entirely to the holiday. At its heart is a blitz interview: we put a few quick questions to very different people, and we will share their answers.

See you on Thanksgiving!

Support the Russian Cultural Garden

The Garden lives thanks to its friends. Your gift helps us care for the Garden, extend the Walk of Fame, build the Rachmaninoff Music Corner and publish the Gazette. Every amount matters: $10, $25 or $100 — each gift helps the Garden grow.

To place a name on the Walk of Fame, the suggested gift is **$250**. Sponsors are listed at RussianGarden.org. A gift may be made in honor or in memory of someone dear to you.

Zelle:

board@russiangarden.org

Russian Cultural Gardens



RUSSIAN Cultural Garden

Stay in Touch

The Russian Garden Gazette is the digital journal of the Russian Cultural Garden, Cleveland — a permanent record of the Garden's life for everyone who has ever called it their own.

Links

RUSSIAN GARDEN WEBSITE

FACEBOOK

THE FORUM OF MINDS

SOCRATESQ

DOWNLOAD PDF

ARCHIVE

INDEX OF NAMES

PREVIOUS ISSUE (#23)

In This Issue

REAL OR IMAGINARY?

“THE ARKHANGELSK PEASANT”: MIKHAIL LOMONOSOV AT 315

A FEW QUESTIONS FOR A DISTINGUISHED RUSSIAN-AMERICAN ECONOMIST

WHO CONTROLS REALITY? VICTOR PELEVIN AND THE ECONOMY OF ILLUSION

MAYA PLISETSKAYA: ETERNAL FLIGHT

A SEASON OF GRATITUDE: A STARS OF SUMMER CONCERT

TWO KARLSSONS, TWO DESTINIES

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

Russian Garden Gazette · Issue #24 · November 19, 2026

Cover and article: M. V. Lomonosov, portrait after Georg Kaspar Prenner, frontispiece from Alexander Smith’s book (The Century Company, New York), public domain, courtesy of Science History Institute; Konstantin Sonin, photo by Saule Tuganbaeva/Chicago; Maya Plisetskaya in *Carmen Suite* (1974), photographer unknown, public domain, via Wikimedia Commons. Crockett Johnson, *Barnaby*, Sunday page (1948). Astrid Lindgren, photographer unknown, from *Astrids bilder*, public domain, via Wikimedia Commons. Concert poster: Stars of Summer Master Agency.

Published by Russian Cultural Gardens, a non-profit organization, Cleveland · Phone 440-263-2951 · Читать по-русски