



THE PRINCESS DASHKOVA RUSSIAN CENTRE SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER 2015 NEWSLETTER

14 Buccleuch Place,
EH8 9LN,
Edinburgh, Tel: 0131
650 99 02

1 October, 2015, Issue 6-7

August Events

Edinburgh International Book Festival. The Crisis in Ukraine. Heralding a New Cold Front?

September Events

The Dashkova Open research Seminar

Prof David MacFadyen (U of California): 'Russian Popular Music and Song Today. Sounds beyond the Mainstream'

The Russian Word in Edinburgh Series: Lev Lurie, St Petersburg: 'How to write guides for the enlightened audience'

Round Table Discussion: 'New Visions of Tolstoy in the 21st Century' with Andrey Baldin, Pavel Basinsky, and Dr Sarah Hudspith

Visit by Vice-Principal of the Tomsk State University Victor Dyomin

The University of Edinburgh in the spotlight: the Dashkova staff give interviews to the film crew of Russian *Kommersant*

October Events

1 Oct, 5:10pm; Dashkova Open Research Seminar Dr Diana Izmailian (RANKHiGS) 'Representing Russian economic crisis 2014-15 in the UK national press: corpus-assisted framing analysis study'

20 Oct, 6:30-7:30pm A Book Launch: Derek Offord, Lara Ryazanova-Clarke, Vladislav Rjéoutski and Gesine Argent (eds). 'French and Russian in Imperial Russia'. A talk by Prof. Derek Offord.

29 October, 6:00pm A Poetry Evening with Peter France. Presentation of the book 'Yevgeny Baratynsky. Half-Light and Other Poems'

News: Welcome party, new volunteers at the Centre and a Final Year Photo Competition



Reporting on our August – September 2015 Events

August and September have been a productive time for the Dashkova Centre: we hosted an impressive variety of events, including a University sponsored debate at the International Book Festival 2015, and progressed with our international academic diplomacy agenda.

Edinburgh International Book Festival

The Crisis in Ukraine. Heralding a New Cold Front?

To top up our series of events on Ukraine, the Dashkova Centre was delighted to be selected by the College to host a University-sponsored debate 'The Crisis in Ukraine. Heralding a New Cold Front?' On the one side was the award winning journalist and writer Peter Pomerantsev and on the other Dr Luke March of the Politics Department and the Dashkova Centre. Pomerantsev who is a Kiev born Edinburgh graduate and the author of the best selling *Nothing is True and Everything is Possible: Adventures in Modern Russia*, and

who recently visited the Ukrainian front line, shared with the audience his first hand, highly emotional impressions of the current situation in the occupied Ukrainian territories of Donetsk and Luhansk, while March supplied an academic underpinning of the crisis and demonstrated parallels with Moldova. The event was sold out as the audience of about 300 enjoyed the art of political sophistication, eloquence and wit coming from the discussants.



Luke March, Jane Bradley and Peter Pomerantsev

David MacFadyen speaks at the Dashkova Open Research Seminar

Professor David MacFadyen, U of California:
‘Russian Popular Music and Song Today. Sounds beyond the Mainstream’
Princess Dashkova Russian Centre and Scotland-Russia Forum joint event
Friday, 11th September



David MacFadyen is a prolific scholar of Russian and post-Soviet popular culture, having written on music, films, literature, as well as new participatory forms of digital media culture. He founded the *Far from Moscow* internet portal which contains over two million audio and video files produced by musicians from Russia and other post-Soviet states.

The lecture explored emergent trends in the contemporary Russian culture. MacFadyen argues that whilst the use of CDs and DVDs is undergoing a rapid decline, more and more users find, share and download audio-visual information via digital media channels, such as YouTube and social networks Vkontakte and Facebook.

As it turns out, Russians are spending more time online than any internet users worldwide. One of the reasons for this is that Russian popular social networks allow for the free (and often illegal) exchange of music, films, and games. This situation has produced an incredibly



Professor David MacFadyen

vibrant music scene operating below the radar of the state-run media.

Such ‘culture of digital piracy’ in Russian digital media has established a unique environment of sharing information, music, and users’ personal creative attempts. This has resulted in regional town’s producing vigorous music scenes of their own, whereas before this



regional spread music production was largely accounted for by the two major Russian cultural and economic centres, Moscow and St Petersburg. Thus, according to MacFadyen, the global web has made music more localised.

Pieces of music created by regionally-based musicians accompanied the lecture and allowed the audience to appreciate inventiveness and creativity of the new generation of Russian musicians.

Lev Lurie contributes to the Russian Word in Edinburgh Series

Lev Lurie, St Petersburg:

**'How to Write Guides for the Enlightened Audience: An example of St. Petersburg'
Friday, 18th September**

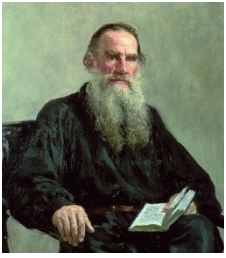


Lev Lurie is a well-known St. Petersburg writer and journalist, who created and hosted many broadcast programmes, having appeared on *Echo Moskvy* radio, and television channels NTV and Petersburg's Channel 5. He is also a historian, a regional studies scholar and a deeply-rooted resident of St Petersburg who has published five books and over a hundred articles about his city. A multiple award winner including the Golden Pen and Antsiferov Prizes, Lurie turns his talks and presentations into energetic, witty, and informative journeys across Russian history and culture.

Lev Lurie's focused on the presentation of major myths and legends of St Petersburg, starting from the date of its foundation. One of such myth is about St Petersburg as the most European city outside Europe which was destined to become a quintessential embodiment of European architectural and artistic styles; a city where a little man is being oppressed by a gigantic and soulless urban conglomeration. Another myth is that of the beauty of St Petersburg of the past centuries as created by *The World of Art* Russian movement at the beginning of the 20th century. Among St Petersburg myths are also the tragic accounts of the siege of Leningrad during WWII; the myths of the city of *Silver* and *Bronze Ages* of Russian literature; and the recent stories of the city's creative urban spaces. According to Lurie, such myths and legends are intertwined with historical facts and may serve as a narrative foundation for a guide book for the sophisticated reader.



Lev Lurie



Round Table Discussion: ‘New Visions of Tolstoy in the 21st Century’

Tuesday, 22nd September

In partnership with Moffat Book Events, the Russian State Library of Foreign Literature and The Institute of Translation, the Dashkova Centre was thrilled to host a round-table to mark the 105 anniversary of Lev Tolstoy’s death.

The roundtable’s leading speakers were the foremost Russian writers and literary critics Andrey Baldin and Pavel Basinsky who were moderated by the British Tolstoy scholar Dr Sarah Hudspith (The University of Leeds). The focus of discussion was a fascinating story of Tolstoy’s departure from Yasnaya Polyana that marked the end of his life, and how Tolstoy is received by audiences then and today.

Andrey Baldin discussed the cultural semantics of the space in Yasnaya Polyana and compared it with the representation of space in *War and Peace*. According to Baldin, Tolstoy’s texts can be compared with a space of a temple that possesses a perfect composition and brings every meaning to the ultima point of its dome, which proclaims a religious and spiritual meaning important for Tolstoy himself. In addition to his spatial experiments, Baldin reconstructed in minute detail the topography and chronology of Tolstoy’s escape from Yasnaya Polyana.

Pavel Basinsky gave a detailed and dramatic account on the media coverage of Tolstoy’s departure, ‘whose every step was relentlessly pursued, despite the fact that in his farewell letter to his wife he had begged people not to look for him’. As Basinsky further commented: ‘The headlines at the time spoke not of Tolstoy’s “departure”, but of a SUDDEN FLIGHT, a DISAPPEARANCE, that TOLSTOY QUILTS HOME. This wasn’t from any desire to sensationalise the affair, it was sensational enough as it was, but because the circumstances of his leaving were more reminiscent of an escape than a triumphant departure’.

Thus, in a paradoxical manner, the ending point of Tolstoy’s life demonstrated a clash between the tradition fostered by the Russian nineteenth century literature and the practices of the media coverage that announced the arrival of the new information age – the twentieth century.



Lara Ryzanova-Clarke, Sarah Hudspith, Mikhail Vodopyanov, Andrey Baldin, and Pavel Basinsky with the audience

Academic Diplomacy



In September, the Dashkova Centre was pleased to welcome Vice-Principal (Academic Affairs) of the Tomsk State University Victor Dyomin and discuss collaboration between Edinburgh and Tomsk University in a number of subject areas, including student mobility and staff research collaboration.

*Lara Ryazanova-Clarke,
Victor Dyomin and
Thomas Ozers*

Tomsk State University



In Russian media spotlight

On 14 September in liaison with The University's Press and PR officer Andrew Moffat the Centre hosted a visit to the University by the crew of journalists from the Russia's *Kommersant* publishing house. *Kommersant* newspaper is a nationally distributed daily liberal business broadsheet with a circulation of over 80,000. The objective of the visit was to produce a video package for *Kommersant*'s digital edition in order to showcase Europe's top educational institutions. The Dashkova team gave detailed on-camera interviews in which we spoke about research and cultural work of the Centre and provided an overview of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and the School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures. We hope that our interviews will be important in promoting Edinburgh University in Russia and, in particular, marketing it for prospective Russian students.

October 2015 Events

Thursday, 1 October, 5:10pm

Dashkova Open Research Seminar

Venue: Princess Dashkova Russian Centre, 14 Buccleuch Pl, Edinburgh EH8 9LN

Dr Diana Izmailyan (RANKHiGS)

'Representing Russian economic crisis 2014-15 in the UK national press: corpus-assisted framing analysis study'

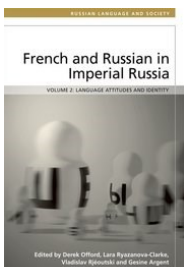
Tuesday, 20 October, 6:30-7:30pm

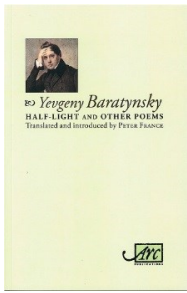
A Book Launch (a joint event with Blackwell's bookstore and Edinburgh University Press)

Venue: Blackwell's Bookshop, 53-62 South Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1YS

Derek Offord, Lara Ryazanova-Clarke, Vladislav Rjéoutski and Gesine Argent (eds).
'French and Russian in Imperial Russia', in 2 volumes. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015.

A talk by Professor Derek Offord.





Thursday, 29 October, 6:00pm

A Poetry Evening with Peter France

Presentation of the book **'Yevgeny Baratynsky. Half-Kight and Other Poems'. Translated and introduced by Peter France. Arc, 2015.**

Venue: Princess Dashkova Russian Centre, 14 Buccleuch Pl, Edinburgh EH8 9LN

News

On September 23, the Dashkova Centre hosted a **Welcome Party** for all students and speakers of Russian, coming to study and continuing their studies at the University of Edinburgh. The party featured some traditional Russian foods and was an excellent opportunity to find new contacts, make friends and begin planning work in the University's Russian society.

We are excited that three **new volunteers** have joined our Centre – postgraduate students Viola Erbach, Elena Granina and the Final Year Russian Studies student Robin Veale. Viola and Robin will run the Russian film club at the Dashkova Centre, while Elena will help in documenting our rapidly growing collection of books including both academic publications and contemporary Russian literature.

The Dashkova Centre invites all Fourth Year students of Russian studies to take part in the photographic exhibition of their year abroad. Please send us (dashkova.centre@ed.ac.uk, with **'Photo Competition'** in the subject field) up to five image files of your choice (no less than 200 dpi), that, in your view, are representative of Russian culture, contemporary society, nature, or indeed of your most memorable and special experiences. Please supply captions for your photographs.

Alternatively, if you already have good size photos, you could simply bring your printed images (with the captions) to the Dashkova Centre (14 Buccleuch Place, Ground Floor, Mon-Fri, 1 p.m.-5 p.m.).

The deadline is 5 p.m., Friday October 9, after which an exhibition will be mounted and everybody will be invited to a fun and informative evening, at which a winner will be announced and everybody will have a chance to share their experiences of Russia and tell the stories of their photographs.

We're on the Web!

Follow us on Facebook for regular updates of news and events.

<https://www.facebook.com/DashkovaCentre>



The Dashkova Centre is on Twitter! You can follow us on [@DashkovaCentre](https://twitter.com/DashkovaCentre)

To become a friend of the Dashkova Centre please contact Dashkova.Centre@ed.ac.uk

The Princess Dashkova Russian Centre

The University of Edinburgh

14 Buccleuch Place, EH8 9LN, Edinburgh, Tel: 0131 650 99 02, Email: Dashkova.Centre@ed.ac.uk.