

Bolshoi Ballet Chief Left Nearly Blind by Acid Attack

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Bolshoi Ballet director Sergei Filin, burned in an acid attack allegedly masterminded by a dancer, is nearly blind despite 18 operations to save his sight, a theater spokeswoman said.

The attack on Filin, which exposed poisonous rivalries over roles, power and pay at the theater, has cast a long shadow over Russia's premier cultural symbol, from which it is still struggling to escape.

At a news conference late last week dedicated to the theater's 2013-14 season program, Filin's absence was palpable as he prepared to undergo what Bolshoi spokeswoman Katerina Novikova said would be his 19th operation to save his eyesight at a clinic in Germany.

"I spoke with Sergei three days ago, and Sergei said the situation is such that he cannot see out of one eye at all, and he can see 10 percent out of the other eye," Novikova said. She would not comment on the chances his eyesight will be restored.

Filin, 42, has vowed to come back to the Bolshoi.

"We spoke to him recently over Skype, and we all talked about issues" at the ballet, said Filin's stand-in Galina Stepanenko, former principal dancer.

"I hope the next time we see him, it will not be as a patient in Germany but after he has already returned," she said.

Bolshoi dancer Pavel Dmitrichenko, who made his name playing villains in "Swan Lake" and "Ivan the Terrible," confessed in a police video to organizing the attack but later said he had not intended acid to be used. In court, Dmitrichenko has said Filin had saved the best roles and salary-boosting grants for his own favorites.

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