

## 6 Beloved Soviet and Russian Cartoons

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A scene from "The Hedgehog in the Fog"

### 1. 'Hedgehog in the Fog' (1975)

A classic of world animation, "The Hedgehog in the Fog" was created by legendary Russian animator Yury Norshtein in 1975. At first glance a simple tale of a young hedgehog's journey through the fog to meet his friend, this visually innovative stop-motion film is also a subtle meditation on the nature of human life. Despite the fame the film earned him, Norshtein has not released a movie in decades. Since 1981 he has been working on an ambitious feature-length animated film of the famed Nikolai Gogol short story "The Overcoat."

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### 2. 'Nu, pogodi!' (1969-2005)

"Nu, pogodi!" — which translates into English as "Well, just you wait!" — was a cult favorite

in the Soviet Union that remains popular in Russia to this day. The drama revolves around the struggle between a wolf — named Volk, or wolf in Russian — and a hare, named Zayats, whom Volk pursues perpetually but can never quite catch.

The wolf resembles a typical Soviet ruffian: he has a low voice, wears a Soviet naval undershirt and smokes constantly. The hare, on the other hand, is a paragon of respectability, always dressed in a clean white collar.

Created by the Soviet Union's pre-eminent animation studio, Soyuzmultfilm, the series' first episodes aired to great acclaim in 1969. A total of 20 episodes have been made over the years.

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### **3. 'Crocodile Gena' (1969)**

In 1969, two of the Soviet Union's most beloved characters appeared on television and promptly won the hearts of children everywhere: Crocodile Gena and his friend Cheburashka.

They appeared in the stop-motion film "Crocodile Gena," which tells the story of the titular crocodile and his search for friendship. Since the film's release, Gena's friend Cheburashka — a little creature with big fluffy ears whom many have described as a "Russian Mickey Mouse" — has become a hugely popular Russian symbol, with his image found in souvenir stores across the country.

Russian children to this day often celebrate their birthdays with the iconic ditty performed by the crocodile in this film: "I play the accordion in front of all the passersby, it's a pity that your birthday comes just once a year."

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### **4. 'Shaybu! Shaybu!' (1964)**

This animated comedy rose to great popularity during the Soviet Union, thanks in no small part to its subject: hockey. The 20-minute film was produced by Soyuzmultfilm and acclaimed as one of the best hand-drawn animations of its time when it premiered in 1964. The only phrase spoken throughout the film is "Shaybu! Shaybu!" — Russian for "Hockey puck! Hockey puck!" — which is an exclamation hockey players commonly use when they are moving to score against the other team.

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### **5. 'Luntik' ('Moonzy') (2006-Present)**

"Luntik," known as "Moonzy" to the English-speaking audience, is an educational series made for preschoolers. It tells the tales of Luntik (or Moonzy in English), a four-eared, good-hearted young alien who fell to Earth from the Moon. In every six-minute episode Luntik

explores life on our planet and learns how to communicate with other creatures, such as insects, fish and frogs. Seven seasons and more than 400 episodes have been produced since the show was launched.

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## **6. 'Masha and the Bear' (2009-Present)**

"Masha and the Bear," a computer-animated television show based on a Russian folk tale of the same name, is one of modern Russia's greatest successes in the field of animation; its bite-size six-minute episodes have been broadcast in dozens of countries since the show launched in 2009. The show's main characters are Masha — a green-eyed, blonde-haired little girl with a penchant for mischief — and her friend the bear, a retired circus performer who does his best to keep her out of trouble.

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