

Russian Soprano Netrebko Condemns Ukraine War, Serebrennikov Leaves Country

The arts and politics have long been tangled together in Russia.

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Operatic soprano Anna Netrebko. **Alexander Demianchuk / TASS**

The Russian art world continues to be in political and physical flux. The Russian opera singer Anna Netrebko, whose previous support for Vladimir Putin and [ambiguous statements](#) about the war in Ukraine resulted in dozens of cancelled performances, tried to set the record straight again on Wednesday.

“I expressly condemn the war on Ukraine and my thoughts are with the victims of this war and their families,” she [wrote](#) on social media.

She added that she was not a member of any Russian political party and had met with Vladimir Putin “only a handful of times in my entire life, most notably on the occasion of receiving awards in recognition of my art or at the Olympics opening ceremony.”

She concluded with the announcement that she would begin work again in late May in Europe but did not provide any details.

In 2014 Netrebko donated 1 million rubles to support the partially damaged Donetsk opera theater in Donbas, where fighting supported by the Russian military has continued to this day. At the time, she [said](#), “I have nothing to do with politics, I just want to support art.” she said. However, after handing over a check to Oleg Tsaryov, sanctioned by the EU for his role in the hostilities, she held up a flag of Novorossiya, the name used for the two “People’s Republics” of Donetsk and Luhansk.

Peter Gelb, the general manager of the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, which cancelled performances with Netrebko, is not ready to renew relations. In an article in The New York Times, he [was quoted as saying](#), “We’re not prepared to change our position. If Anna demonstrates that she has truly and completely disassociated herself from Putin over the long term, I would be willing to have a conversation.”

A happier exit

The theater and film director Kirill Serebrennikov left Russia after a Moscow court on Monday responded to his appeal and expunged his conviction for large-scale fraud.

Serebrennikov [was photographed](#) in Paris wearing a T-shirt that read “I turned off the TV.”

Serebrennikov and his associates had been charged with embezzling government funds provided to his Seventh Studio group for a project called “Platform.” Serebrennikov was kept under house arrest from August 2017 to April 2019, found guilty in 2020 and given a three-year suspended sentence and ordered to pay a fine of 800,000 rubles (more than \$10,000).

He was not able to leave Russia while serving his sentence.

Serebrennikov is [reportedly working](#) on a film about the tempestuous relationship between Pyotr Tchaikovsky and his wife, Antoniya Milyukova.

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