



*Did You know that*  
*the only opera and ballet house*  
*named after the country is the*  
*Estonian National Opera!*

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*Rahvusooper Estonia in Estonian.*

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Tiesitkö, että maailman ainut ooppera- ja balletiteatteri, jolla on valtion nimi, on Kansallisooppera Estonia.

Знаете ли вы, что единственный в мире театр оперы и балета, названный по имени страны — это Национальная опера «Эстония».

Kas teadsid, et ainus ooperi- ja balletiteater maailmas, mis kannab riigi nime, on Rahvusooper Estonia.



The building of the Estonian National Opera has always been more than just a theatre and a concert hall for the people of Estonia. On 23 April 1919, the first Estonian Parliament – the Estonian Constituent Assembly – assembled in the concert hall of the “Estonia” theatre.





During the Soviet aerial bombardment of 9 March 1944, the theatre building was destroyed. On that tragic evening, there was a performance of “The Goblin” by Eduard Tubin on stage. The dancers fled the ruins without having the time to change and as people’s fantasies ran wild, it was reported that, “a goblin and the devil were seen among the burning ruins.” The building was renovated in the second half of the 1940s.

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ДВАДЦАТЬ ПЯТЬ РУБЛЕЙ

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Ревельское Товарищество на паяхъ для устройства  
и содержанія эстонскаго театра „ЭСТОНІА“.

№ 180

ПАЙ № 5015

Руб. 25.—

2-ой выпускъ

Выданъ: г-ну Оскару Корсевичу Амбергъ

г. Ревель, 9<sup>го</sup> сентября 1916 г.

Предсѣдатель совѣта:

Предсѣдатель правленія:

Бухгалтеръ:

Кассиръ:



Tallinna Eesti teatri „ESTONIA“  
ehituse ja ülespidamise osahhisus.

№ 180

Osa-täht № 5015

Rbl. 25.—

2. väljanne.

Wälja antud: kella Oskar Jüri p. Amberg

Tallinnas, 9<sup>septembri</sup> 1916 a.

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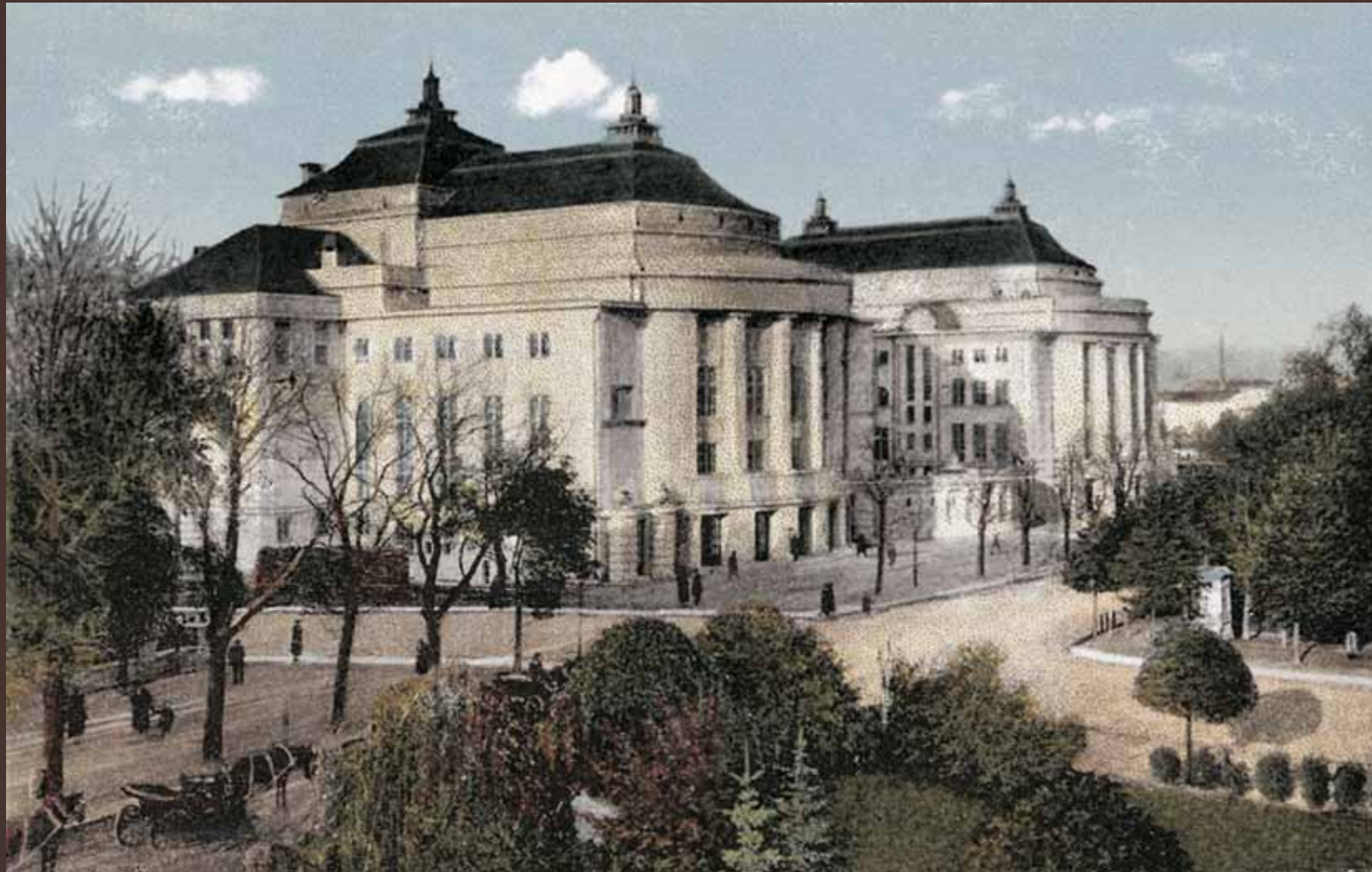
ДВАДЦАТЬ ПЯТЬ РУБЛЕЙ

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J. &amp; R. Paulmann, Tallinnas.

It is probably the most famous building in Estonia that was constructed with the help of donations from the people. Fundraisers and soirées were organised, and 25-ruble share certificates were eagerly realised all over Estonia and even in St. Petersburg.





The Jugend-classicistic theatre building designed by Finnish architects Armas Lindgren and Wivi Lönn was completed in 1913 and was the largest building in Tallinn back then.



The President of the Republic of Estonia holds the Estonian Independence Day reception in the “Estonia” theatre house.

In the photo: President of the Republic of Estonia Toomas Hendrik Ilves and Mrs. Evelin Ilves, Estonian conductor Eri Klas and Mrs. Ariel Klas.



There are numerous legends about the construction of the theatre and concert house. One of them is about the poet Juhan Liiv, who fell to his knees by the construction site and exclaimed: “Dear homeland! Forgive me for being poor; forgive me that I cannot give much to help build this temple, but I want to give what little I have.” He took off his clothes and wanted to leave them there, but a city guard stepped in and stopped him.





Local limestone was the desired building material, with the plastic decor inspired by ethnic examples and the interior colours by the nature of Estonia.





The theatre building has also been used for other purposes: during World War I, it housed a military hospital. The balcony side of the concert hall was used as an Orthodox church. It has also held a casino, restaurant, bowling alley and pharmacy.



The first World Weightlifting Championships were held in “Estonia” theatre in 1922, World Champions (from left): Alfred Neuland (Estonia), Saul Hallap (Estonia), Heinrich Graf (Switzerland), Roger François (France) and Harald Tammer (Estonia).



The first Estonian ballet “The Goblin” by Eduard Tubin (“Kratt”, 1944) was premiered in Theatre Estonia on 24 February 1944 – the 26th anniversary of the Republic of Estonia. A new performance of “The Goblin” by choreographer Marina Kesler will reach the stage in 2015.





In 2010, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II gave orders for Thomas Edur (the Artistic Director of the Estonian National Ballet) and Agnes Oaks (assistant to the Artistic Director) each to be appointed as Commanders of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire. This is in recognition of their services to the arts in the UK and UK-Estonia cultural relations.