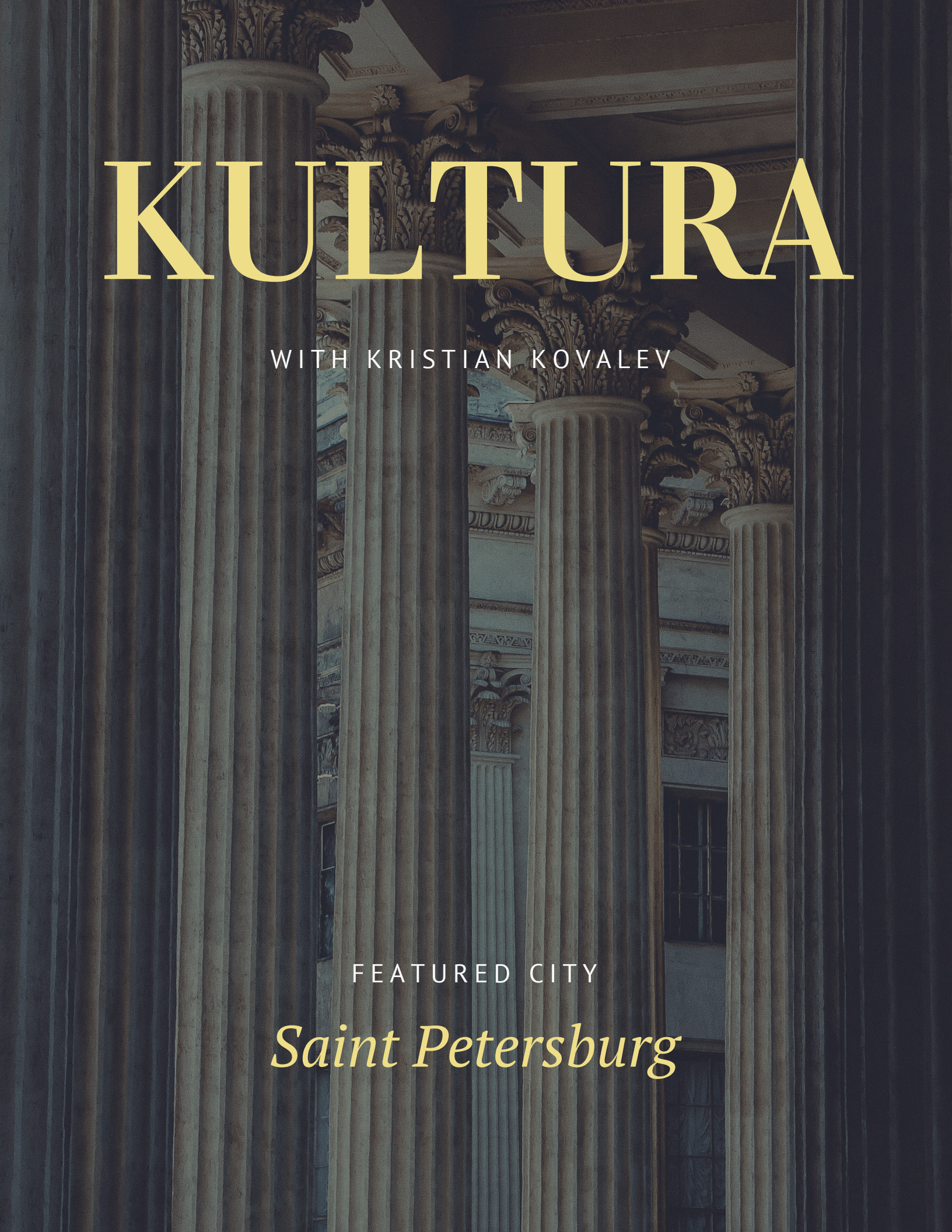




KULTURA

WITH KRISTIAN KOVALEV

FEATURED CITY

Saint Petersburg



Featured City of this Issue

Saint Petersburg is, unofficially, the second capital of Russia and the primary cultural centre of the country. It is renowned for having one of Europe's most entrancing architectural characters, with such monumental institutions as the Hermitage Museum, Mariinsky Theatre, Saint Isaac's Cathedral, Winter Palace, Alexander Column, Peterhof and more.

The cultural ties of Saint Petersburg were made back in the 18th century, under Peter I, the founder of the city. Peter I focused on making the new capital as culturally developed as possible, influenced by cities in other European countries, including The Netherlands and Austria. In 1756, then empress, Elizabeth I, founded the first theatre in Russia.

Today, the city has 8464 cultural and historical monuments, which are objects of cultural heritage. At the same time, 4213 of them are objects of cultural heritage of federal significance. The various theatres, museums, libraries and architectural statues bring in millions of tourists each year, making Saint Petersburg truly deserve its title.



The Story Behind “Joy of Labour”

The whole story of “Joy of Labour” occurred when I was cleaning out a drawer. For the most part, the drawer contained various old documents and other uninteresting papers, which I, unquestionably, disposed of. I was getting ready to get rid of the last pile of papers when I suddenly stumbled upon something that looked to be a fragment of a newspaper, accompanied by a photograph of my young grandfather. This caught my eye, so I picked the curious page up to see exactly what it was all about. Almost immediately, I realized that it was, as I suspected, a photocopied article from a local Soviet newspaper, from the year 1981.

It was remarkable; how could I be unaware of the fact that the story of my grandfather’s professional career was recorded in full detail in a newspaper?

In any case, my mind began sparking with ideas, I wanted to call up my grandfather, whose name is Vladimir, so that I could tell him about my new discovery. I quickly rejected the thought, however, as I figured that I could turn this small article, as mad as it might sound, into a fully developed short book and present it to him as a surprise gift.



I began with the advancement of this new project by searching online, to possibly find a clearer and more detailed archived version of the article but all to no avail. Although I was able to find similar looking newspaper snippets, the exact newspaper I was looking for was nowhere to be found, in whole or in part. I came to the conclusion that, perhaps, old local newspapers from Omsk, let alone from the times of the Soviet Union, are unlikely to be archived somewhere online. Needless to say, I focused on the material I actually had, even if it wasn't in the most pristine condition. Of course, I could have asked my grandpa for the original copy, which he probably still had in his possession, but I didn't want to spoil the surprise, as he would undoubtedly ask me where my instantaneous interest in old newspapers came from.

Word by word, I started transferring the descriptions of my grandfather's early career onto the digital screen. I had to make sure that there were no mistakes, including any missing paragraphs, as I wanted not to lose important information from the story while I was putting my project into realization. On the contrary, I wanted to enhance the experience the reader would have when engaging with the book.

After finishing the, in many ways, dull and tedious job of transferring text, I moved on to a more captivating activity. It involved the meticulous design and formatting of the book, which would serve as the primary link between the 1981 article and the reader. I decided to go for a sort of retro-style, utilizing mostly dark colours and typewriter elements to really get that newspaper feel. Conclusively, I added the finishing touches, which were two photos of my grandpa; one taken from the article and the other, a modern photo of him holding my niece.



Now I understood, no money would be made from this project, not that I had any intention to make any profit off of it. I downloaded the book and was ready to release it to the Department of Print and Literature website. However, I was still unsatisfied, as I felt there could be more done for the project. One idea I came up with was to make an audiobook version as well, leading me to record my reading of the book from beginning to end. I then uploaded the recordings and subsequently edited them to make the perfect audiobook, or well, as perfect as I could make it. I was almost finished, but the second idea I had would not let me sleep. The idea was to make one copy of a special edition of the book in a fully printed format. I had already done something similar with “Life In The Soviet Union”, when I gave a printed copy to my grandmother and, now, I wanted to do the same with this book.

Soon enough, the day came when I would meet with my grandfather and gift him the book came. I was exhilarated to say the least. Finally, I would be able to hand him the project that I worked so hard to finish, and I hoped he would be as thrilled as I was to receive it. When the moment came, I saw it in his eyes, he was more than just happy, he was absolutely touched, commenting “well, just like a journalist”. As a university student, I was pleased by this remark, as it confirmed the professionalism of the work. I knew that this was a great achievement for me and for the K.A.E.Z Company, as it became a part of the ever-growing collection of books the company’s department had.

This project was a great success, but it is not the end, as the English version is in the works and will be released eventually.

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The Beauty of Saint Petersburg

Saint Petersburg is, no doubt, one of the most beautiful cities of Europe and the world. Nicknamed Northern Venice, the city can truly provide a visitor with an unforgettable experience, physically and morally. The outside views of the city can already overwhelm a person with beauty, though, this fact shouldn't stop anyone from visiting these grandeur institutions, whether it be to view paintings for hours or to enjoy high-level theatrical performances.





Cultural Figures in Saint Petersburg

The most famous Russian cultural figures at one point lived and worked in Saint Petersburg: composers Peter Tchaikovsky and Dmitry Shostakovich, writers and poets Alexander Pushkin, Nikolai Gogol, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Nikolai Gumilev, Alexander Blok, Anna Akhmatova, Andrei White, Joseph Brodsky, Sergei Dovlatov and others.

