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Cracked, &c.

Тріщини тощо

Прем'єр-міністр України Д. Шмигаль заявив, що Росія прагне зірвати євроатлантичні прагнення України. Голова уряду закликав країни НАТО та ЄС до солідарної відповіді на провокації РФ. Зі слів очільника уряду, постійне нарощування російського військового контингенту біля українських кордонів – це один із інструментів агресивної політики Кремля. Зі слів Д. Шмигала, Кремль зацікавлений не тільки у дестабілізації ситуації в Україні, а й у дестабілізації країн ЄС та НАТО.

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On a cancellation of *The Nutcracker*; Russia's threat to Ukraine; the screwiness of the Women's March; the bravery of J.K. Rowling; and more

Now they have come for *The Nutcracker*. What I mean is, did you see [this](#)? The Berlin State Ballet has canceled Tchaikovsky's ballet on grounds that the Chinese dance and the Arab dance give offense. Well, they give offense to those who are truly dying to take offense. To everyone else: They give delight and enchantment. Earlier this month, I wrote a piece called "[Fight for Music](#)." We'll have to, if we're to keep it. In 2016, I wrote a piece called "[Killing Aida](#)," about the clash between art and identity politics. They cannot coexist: art and identity politics. One of them will have to go. I pray it's not art. Art, by nature, is universal and human. This may be especially so of music (and wordless music, most of all).

- A reader brought [this article](#), from September, to my attention: English Touring Opera (ETO) has dropped half of its orchestral players in a push for diversity. At least 14 musicians have been told they will not be booked for the 2022 ETO tour, many of them long-running members of the orchestra. The ETO has attributed the changes to prioritising "increased diversity in the orchestra," something that's in line with "firm guidance of the Arts Council." On Twitter, I said that this story was "a sign of our times." I further commented, "As soon as you get away from treating human beings as individuals — you're in the soup." A reader, or tweeter, responded, "As soon as you realize that for 100s of years whole categories of people who don't look like you weren't treated as individuals, fixing the mix seems not so objectionable." I understand. But here's the thing: Those 14 musicians, who were fired, on account of their race, are not mere symbols. They're living, breathing human beings, who are trying to make a living. This is a big subject . . .

- "Ukraine PM calls for NATO's help against Russia." That's a headline over an [article](#). The subheading is, "As Russian troops mass along border, Denys Shmyhal urges NATO to send ships and step up surveillance flights." Many people are calling for an accommodation of Putin — even the sacrifice of Ukraine for him. Garry Kasparov tweeted: This new flood of pro-appeasement articles isn't a coincidence. Just don't forget the facts. Putin is still invading Ukraine, a European nation, a war where he is the only

aggressor, with daily casualties. Arguing he hasn't been appeased enough is false and pathetic. I also noted a tweet from Josh Mandel, the Ohio Republican: We're not fighting the Nazis anymore, so why do we have these enormous military bases all over Europe?

The mission of our military is to protect the AMERICAN people — not to subsidize European socialism or to prop up the military industrial complex. My sense is, this view is very popular in our country, on both left and right. Do you know who Éric Zemmour is? He's a French rightist, who's gaining popularity among the international Right. I will quote **RJ Smith**: . . . Zemmour has much in common with left-wing firebrand Jean-Luc Mйlenchon . . . Mйlenchon and Zemmour have both denied the Vichy regime's responsibility for the death of 75,000 Jews sent to Nazi camps . . . In a recent televised debate between the two, both agreed that NATO is an obsolete instrument of American imperialism. Zemmour added that he favours renouncing France's alliances with the US, UK, and Germany and "joining hands with Russia."

Lot of that goin' around.

- The thing about Russian people — especially critics of the Putin regime — is that they are incredibly careless. They keep falling down stairs and out of windows and gettin' poisoned and all that. Idiots. Klutzes. A recent headline: "Wife of jailed Russian tycoon is found dead in London." (Article [here](#).) The subheading: "Friends of Irina Izmestieva, 52, have called for MI5 to investigate after her body was discovered on a sofa amid fears she was poisoned."