

Stars of the future

New world pop stars appear at *Junior Eurovision* in Minsk

By Viktor Korbut

“Are you happy?” *Junior Eurovision* host Denis Kuryan asked the winner of the contest, speaking in English. Vladimir Arzumanyan of Armenia didn't understand him at first. “To sing?” wondered Vladimir, in Russian, remembering that he'd need to perform again as the winner. Mr. Kuryan repeated the question again in Russian and Vladimir responded, “Yes!”

Nobody could doubt the answer of the young star from mountainous Armenia, situated at the furthest reaches of Europe. Vladimir Arzumanyan is now famous throughout the continent, having found fame and glory in Minsk, which hosted *Junior Eurovision-2010*. The Russian duo — Liza Drozd and Sasha Lazin — stirred the audience with their *Boy and Girl*, while Serbian Sonja Skoric was also among those with the highest scores. Mariam Kakhelishvili of Georgia, singing *Mari-Dari*, came fourth and was called Baby Gaga, because of her resemblance to Lady Gaga.

The 8th *Junior Eurovision*

brought together entrants from 14 countries, performing at Minsk-Arena: the biggest stage in the history of the children's event. The contest's finals and two open rehearsals were attended by 40,000 people. Maria Guleghina, a world opera state and UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, especially arrived in the Belarusian capital to take part in *Junior Eurovision*, alongside *Eurovision-2009* winner Alexander Rybak (a Belarus-born Norwegian). Mr. Rybak admitted that he was greatly delighted by Daniil Kozlov's song and praised the organisation of *Junior Eurovision* in Minsk; he described it as being ‘just as good as that in Oslo’. Mr. Rybak sang a song about Europe. “I've sung as if about a girl, but my words actually refer to Europe,” he explained, adding, “I'm very pleased to again visit Belarus, my homeland. It's always so quiet and calm here.”

However, it was far from quiet on the *Junior Eurovision* stage, with emotions running high among entrants and spectators. Passions were also high for other reasons. Svante Stock-

selius, the Executive Supervisor of the *Eurovision Song Contest*, noted that there were rumours that this year's *Junior Eurovision* was the last ever. “However, I'm convinced of the opposite. Several countries have requested the honour of hosting the next contest; we're currently negotiating,” he explains. He praised the high level of the event's organisation in Minsk, adding, “This year, the organisers brought together the winners of all previous events on one stage. No one has ever done this before. I'm satisfied with the preparations; the producers clearly worked professionally. I'm also aware that all the delegations and children were pleased to be here.”

The President of Belarus attended the musical show and called it a special holiday, saying, “It's no ordinary competition. It's a true event for Belarus. The whole country is keen on it.” Addressing Jørgen Franck, the Director ad Interim of the European Broadcasting Union's Television Department, Alexander Lukashenko noted, “If you've liked our work, you should also bring the



Vladimir Arzumanyan now famous across whole continent

adult *Eurovision* here. We now boast the basis for organising the adult contest.” Mr. Franck responded that, if a Belarusian performer wins the adult *Eurovision*, it will certainly come to Minsk. He added that Belarus boasts talented singers.

The MT's reference:

The *Junior Eurovision Song Contest* is organised annually from November-December, under the auspice of the European Broadcasting Union. Each participant performs their own songs. The first contest took place in

Copenhagen (Denmark) on November 15th, 2003, and Belarus has been taking part in the event since its foundation. It is the only state to have won twice: in 2005 and 2007. Belarus has been represented at *Junior Eurovision* by Olga Satsyuk (2003, ranked fourth); Yegor Volchek (2004, 14th place); Ksenia Sitnik (2005, winner); Andrey Kunets (2006, 2nd); Alexey Zhigalkovich (2007, winner); trio Darya Nadina, Alina Molosh and Karina Zhukovich (2008, 6th); and Yuri Demidovich (9th in 2009).



Minsk-Arena multifunctional complex heartily welcomes guests



Abundance of emotions passed from performers to audience



Daniil Kozlov on stage

Unforgettable and splendid evening of prominent maestro's enchanting music

By Valentin Pavlovsky

Every evening, Minsk hosts a variety of musical events, yet true music fans were unable to miss a magnificent concert by the famous Paul Mauriat Grand Orchestra, hosted by the Palace of the Republic

The Orchestra brought an unforgettable evening of elevated joy to the audience, as part of its European tour, dedicated to the memory of maestro Mauriat, who died in 2006. His pupil, conductor Jean-Jacques Justafre, continues the traditions of his outstanding teacher, jointly with Mauriat's widow, Irene.

As soon as the Orchestra began to play in the Main Hall of the Palace of the Republic, the respectable and sophisticated audience immediately

lapsed into light nostalgia. Playing well-loved tunes from *A Man and a Woman*, *Umbrellas of Cherbourg* and *The Godfather*, the evening embraced French and pan-European musical culture.

Those familiar with film classics of French and European cinematography recognised the soft, polished and inventive melodies. It seemed as if Louis de Funès or Pierre Richard might appear from behind the

curtains at any moment.

The Paul Mauriat Grand Orchestra boasts splendid technical style, envied by many of our orchestras. Each performance offers a solo — guitar or flute, violin or piano — with each soloist introduced separately by the conductor himself.

Since its first existence, the Orchestra has liaised with almost every French star imaginable — from Charles

Aznavour, Dalida and Maurice Chevalier to Leny Escudero and, of course, Mireille Mathieu.

This year, the Grand Orchestra is also celebrating its 45th anniversary. “I'm delighted to continue our wonderful story of love between audiences and the music of the great Paul Mauriat,” admitted conductor Jean-Jacques Justafre, giving his farewell to Minsk spectators.



Musicians of famous orchestra present unforgettable minutes to audience

Rich history of ancient city

By Oksana Shikut

Minsk's mythical founder could gain status as historical-cultural treasure

The Minsk City Executive Committee has sent materials on Menesk — the mythical founder of the ancient city of Minsk (Mensk) — to the Culture Ministry. The legend was first published in the mid-19th century by famous Belarusian ethnographer and writer Pavel Shpilevsky.

Minsk has always been surrounded by legends. One says that Menesk settled near the Vilno postal road long ago, building a huge stone mill on the River Svisloch to grind flour not from wheat but from pebbles. Every night, Me-

nesk gathered the strongest men to protect the area from enemy attacks. Eventually, they all settled near Menesk's mill and the city was founded, initially known as Menesk before transforming into Mensk and Minsk.

According to documentation, the capital was named after the Menka River, on which it was founded. Another version is that the name originates from the Slavonic word ‘mena’ (Russian for ‘change’) — as the city was situated at a crossroads of trading routes and became a trading post itself.

The city is almost 11 centuries old and was first mentioned in the legendary Tale of Bygone Years, in 1067.