

Time to make hits

Belarusian *Pesnyary* state ensemble releases new album called *Happiness*, including songs inspired by early verses of Belarusian classical writer Yanka Kupala

Vyacheslav Sharapov is the band's director and artistic leader, responsible for the move.

Vyacheslav, what kind of songs do you rate most highly?

I prefer those which stand the test of time, remaining popular over the years. I think we lack artistic councils now, which were common in the past. As a result, our modern broadcasting is filled with works which are rather repetitive, with no redeeming features; they lack thoughtful lyrics or memorable melodies. They are like nails being knocked into the brain! Belarus has no radio stations which choose their playlists via aesthetic censorship.

Which of your pieces

touch listeners' hearts do you think?

In the first thirty years of 'Pesnyary' existence, until 2000, the repertoire included 30-40 songs which were timeless, suitable for any audience and in any place. During our fourth generation, we've produced about five such songs: our version of Oginski's polonaise, 'Knyazhna' (Princess), 'Litvinka' (Lithuanian Woman), 'Lya Zamkavai Gary' (Near Zamkovaya Hill) and 'Zhnyaya' (Sickle-Woman). Frankly, we didn't aim to create songs which would be immediately appealing, preferring to perform old songs, without recording any new ones. It seemed that we could do this for a long time. We don't compose songs to tickle



Pesnyary ensemble still prefers folk melodies

our vanity, seeking applause. Rather, when we enrolled new young artistes in 2003, our major task was to set up a band which would be able to play and sing live, continuing the work of our predecessors and making a worthy stage show.

People will definitely search for hits in your *Happiness*. Did you create the album to be a compilation of songs united by a common idea or mood? Or is it a global concept?

Of course, the album aims

to show our best artistic skills and we wanted it to be stylistically diverse. We also wanted to show that Kupala's poetry is diverse when accompanied by music. The disc has some jazz pieces, in addition to those performed in Latino style, alongside modern classics and rock. It combines classic poetry with diverse genres of music. After releasing a national album, we've begun recording songs which we think audiences will enjoy singing along to.

There are some possible hits — such a *Zhnyaya*...

You are probably right. It must be a revelation for many Kupala lovers that 'Song of a Bell Ringer' — previously seen as a revolutionary anthem — is rather a rollicking song about a strong young man when performed by us.

Aren't you afraid that Yanka Kupala's passionate fans will oppose your arrangements? For example, a guitarist plays Santana in your *Forest Lake*...

This song was composed and arranged by Roman Kozyrev. Like other musicians,

he freely expresses his ideas. Audiences can decide their own opinions. During our Minsk premiere, we measured the duration of audiences' applause and saw the longest after this song. The same situation was observed in Brest.

It seems to me that our programme has four potential hits: not smash-hits which remain popular for only a short time, but songs which will endure. I think it's high time that 'Pesnyary' composed such songs.

By Kirill Yevstigneev

New discoveries of Françoise Limouzy

By Svetlana Dorokhova

Snow-covered forests and fields enable French painter to enjoy elegance and gracefulness of Belarusian nature

Speaking at the opening ceremony at the Marc Chagall Art Centre in Vitebsk, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of France to Belarus, H.E. Mr. Michel Raineri, stressed that the first Belarusian-French joint artistic project was launched in Marc Chagall's native city after much consideration. Although Ms. Limouzy's painting style is quite different to that of Chagall, both feel art in their souls.

Ms. Limouzy lives in the south of France, in the city of Céret, and loves to depict landscapes. She began her creative path as a theatre actress, but left the theatre as soon as she became involved



Françoise Limouzy's colours and form prove attractive

in painting, passing the 'acting baton' to her daughter.

"I have arrived in Vitebsk, Marc Chagall's homeland, for a friendly visit," notes Françoise. "Chagall often visited my native Catalonia and his works are kept at a local museum, including his ceramic artworks. Other painters from Belarus have also lived in Céret: Soutine, Pinchus and Nadia Léger. I feel joyful energy in your coun-

try. There's so much tenderness and calmness in people's manner, in addition to a respectful attitude. I'm lucky to have seen Belarus for myself at the end of winter. Snow-covered forests and fields have enabled me to enjoy the elegance and gracefulness of Belarusian nature."

The artist has a special attitude towards nature; her pictures always depict the sun and wind. She even likes

to dilute her paints with rain water to 'dissolve' the colour, making it more transparent and easier to use. Some of her works from *Sea Foam*, *Canigou Mountain* and *Lake in Norway* series were created especially for the exhibition in Vitebsk, which Ms. Limouzy calls *Water and Rock*. She primarily uses acrylic paints and watercolour, working on canvas or paper, admitting that she has close relations with colour and form.

After Vitebsk, Ms. Limouzy's exhibition will go to Gomel — the cultural capital of Belarus and the CIS for 2011. It will then go on show in Minsk, during Modern Art Week, this autumn. "Every Frenchman who sees Belarus sincerely loves it. Such exhibitions promote mutual understanding between nations, so joint projects relating to culture and trade will surely continue," promises Mr. Raineri.

Contemporary profile for ancient church

By Tamara Pastushenkova

Murovanka village's Church of the Holy Nativity of the Mother of God, in Grodno Region's Shchuchin District, applies for UNESCO World Cultural Heritage List

The famous fortified church, constructed in the first half of the 16th



Famous fortified church

century in Gothic style to honour the Nativity of the Mother of God, is a monument to Belarusian defence architecture; it is an historical and cultural treasure of world significance. Its unusual shape appears to have been inspired by Muslim minarets.

The church is a four-columned, one floored build-

ing, with 2m high walls and a lofty, double-pitched roof. Corner cylindrical towers, with two layers of holes to allow shooting with hand-held firearms, give a severe, warlike appearance. Previously, the entrance in the western wall was closed by iron doors and a defensive latticed grille could be lowered from above.

The ancient Belarusian church remains operational, annually organising a festive liturgy on September 21st: the Nativity of Our Most Holy Lady Mother of God and Ever Virgin Mary.

The historical and cultural treasure is currently undergoing comprehensive analysis, since accurate data is needed to compile a profile for UNESCO. This year, its grounds are to be cleared, with the entrance gates and fencing around the church restored. Moreover, plaster coatings are being removed to reveal the character of its original construction and traces of reconstruction over the years. Earlier coats of paint and, even, frescoes are being discovered. Site scientific leader Gennady Lavretsky notes that each layer will be displayed for viewing. The church walls are now in order, proving informative and interesting to visitors.

Interest in theatrical school

By Tatiana Doroshchenok

Annually, around 60 French student actors take part in master classes in Belarus

According to Yulia Ke-bich, co-ordinator of Teatro International Public Association's programmes, Francophonie Days in Minsk are also visited by students from

other French speaking countries, such as Switzerland and Belgium. Master classes are attended by actors of various ages: novices and experienced veterans. Stanislavsky's system is taught, alongside the theatrical art of Belarus. The French are interested in the Belarusian theatrical school, as it is so different to that available in France. Moreover, they are at-

tracted by our intensive educational programme, which offers great experience within a short time. Alongside acting skills, students study classical dance, acrobatics, singing, theatre make-up and the Russian language.

The Teatro Association was established in 2007 at the initiative of the Belarusian State Academy of Arts and

France's Demain le Printemps Association. At present, it is the only theatrical association in Belarus to organise regular international exchanges, meetings and internships. It liaises with the Republican Belarusian Drama Theatre and National Art Museum, with the French Embassy to Belarus and with the Belarusian State University.