

Premiere of *Silva* at Belarusian State Academic Musical Theatre gathers full house

Bravo, maestro Bouvet!

By Anton Nenashev

One of the world's best organists — Alain Bouvet of France — shares unforgettable emotions with Belarusian audience

The prominent virtuoso musician performed within the *Masterpieces of World Organ Art* series, organised by musical scholar Olga Savitskaya. Born in Normandy, the pupil of famous André Marchand has played the organ at the Church of Saint-Étienne at Caen since 1990. He has successfully toured Europe, the USA and Canada, giving concerts which are colourful, diverse and technically complex. His performances are brilliant and perfect, always commanding encores and cries of 'Bravo!'

In Minsk, Mr. Bouvet's programme included pieces by Johann Sebastian Bach, alongside lesser known French composers such as Lefébure-Wely, Jean Langlais and Jehan Alain. His rendering of *Symphonie-Passion* was particularly impressive. This incredibly difficult piece to play, from a technical point of view, is a virtuoso work by one of the most famous organists of the 20th century: Marcel Dupré.

A virtuoso composer with a spectacular manner of performance, showed his full genius in this composition. With its intensity, depth of expression and form and use of the deepest basses, exclamatory trumpets and splendid roar of reeds, *Symphonie-Passion* is worthy of being named Dupré's most popular piece.

Let sadness fade away

It's difficult to imagine a ballet company lacking *Swan Lake* on its repertoire, or an opera theatre without *Carmen*. Similarly, Chekhov's *Cherry Orchard* is a staple of the dramatic theatre, regardless of experimental interpretations and novelties of set or costume. Naturally, audiences still love to see the play performed in its classical form. It is such a core piece of drama, exploring the depths of human nature, that nothing compares in showing a troupe's true skill

By Piotr Vladislavlev

Imre Kalman's *Silva* (*Die Csárdásfürstin*) is undoubtedly a landmark piece of operetta, performed on world stages for over 90 years. It has survived various interpretations and has been dissected in any number of ways. Now, the Belarusian State Academic Musical Theatre is hosting a premiere, staged by its chief director Suzanna Tsiryuk.

It's true to say that we each see what we desire in the operetta, while each performer gives us their own interpreta-

tion of their role. The performance can appear bright and festive, like a fantasy, or treacle sweet in turn. Stage manager and theatre chief director Suzanna Tsiryuk has followed the author's original stage directions, so is confident that her performance differs from previous versions.

She explains, "We're trying to avoid 'sugary pseudopathos' — a peculiar feature of Soviet operetta; we want to make the story as believable as possible. It's a challenge but, at least, that is our intention. My directing principle is

simple: there shouldn't be any seam in the performance. The audience shouldn't see where my direction ends and where the choreography begins. The dance continues on from the dialogue and relations of characters. I think it's stylish, laconic and constructive. I've set the action in the present, with 'Galliano' style costumes, which are extremely beautiful."

The performance is the first for the theatre's new chief conductor, Oleg Lesun. He notes, "Of course, the orchestra and some soloists remem-

ber something from previous performances, so it's difficult to put that aside. However, I think, we've managed to do well and solved all contradictions."

The new *Silva* premiere boasts three teams of soloists, with People's Artiste of Belarus Natalia Gaida playing the role of Duchess Alexandra. She smiles, "If it were not for our stage company working so calmly, we'd have hardly managed to prepare everything within such a short period of time. I've played in all four performances of *Silva* at our

theatre. Of course, this covers four quite different times and four completely different performances. I'm sometimes asked whether we need to reinvent old works, making them more modern, and how we should interpret this operetta. Regardless of what we do, audiences enjoy performances which explore human nature and relations. If you perform from the heart, your efforts are, undoubtedly, interesting to contemporary spectators."

March premieres of *Silva* saw full houses at the Musical Theatre.

Music goes beyond limits

Belarusian-French Youth Symphony Orchestra, headed by People's Artiste of Belarus Mikhail Kozinets, is great success in France

By Galina Grishkovets

Fifteen students from the *Young Belarus* Symphony Orchestra of the Belarusian State Academy of Music have joined fifty of those from the Conservatoire du Grand Nancy to perform in Nancy. The first half of the concert featured Franz Liszt's works (whose 200th anniversary is celebrated this year). They played to a full house in the Poirel Concert Hall, with music by famous Belarusian composer Dmitry Smolsky playing in the second half.

Although the French audience is 'spoilt' for local and foreign celebrities, it was greatly impressed by the brilliant performance of Belarusian and French musicians, led by Mikhail Kozinets. The young performers had only four rehearsals before the event.

The performance was met by

a storm of applause, with Belarusian soloist and international contest laureate Natalia Kotova delighting the audience with her virtuoso piano playing.

The event was part of a Belarusian-French cultural project, initiated by Arkady Volodos, a famous opera singer in Europe. He was born in Belarus and has lived in Paris for 32 years; he studied at the Belarusian Conservatoire at the same time as Mr. Kozinets.

His talent and hard work have allowed Mr. Volodos to enjoy a meteoric career in Paris, teaching at the Conservatoire du Grand Nancy. His idea to unite the efforts of gifted young musicians from our two countries has been finally brought to life with assistance from Mr. Volodos and the Director of the Conservatoire du Grand Nancy, Jean-Philippe Navarre. In addition, Nancy Town

Hall and the Belarusian Culture Ministry have supported the project.

In October 2010, the joint Belarusian-French Youth Symphony Orchestra debuted on the stage of the Belarusian State Philharmonic Society in Minsk. The orchestra was conducted by Jean-Philippe Navarre, with 18 French musicians arriving in Minsk. Now, Belarusians have visited the city of Nancy.

Mr. Navarre, who has worked hard to implement this musical Belarusian-French project, is delighted by the brilliant performance of the Belarusian musicians. He believes that his students have something to learn from their Belarusian colleagues. In particular, our Belarusian musicians boast very strong skills in string instrument playing. Meanwhile, the French are wind instrument



Symphony Orchestra performs to encore

experts, so we can certainly learn much from each other.

Mr. Navarre stresses that, in future, musical exchanges between France and Belarus will continue, probably including teachers. The Head of the Conservatoire du Grand Nancy also notes the talent of Belarus-born opera singer Arkady Volodos, who initiated the wonderful project and has helped realise it.

Mr. Volodos attended the

concert in Nancy and was impressed by the perfect performances of works of Franz Liszt and Dmitry Smolsky. He believes co-operation between our two states' young musicians will yield good results.

People's Artiste of Belarus Mikhail Kozinets emphasises that an audience's reaction is the best way of assessing a concert; clearly the event was a resounding success.