

'I'm no virtuoso; I just perform beautiful melodies'

Guitarist Irina Ignatyuk has become popular over a short time, perhaps because her music fills listeners with warmth, conjuring up sun, sand, ocean waves and other exotic notions

This delicate young lady is able to transform a guitar into a singing lyre, her melodies revealing the finest shades of feelings and moods. Music lovers from Spain, Austria, Latvia, Russia, Lithuania, Kazakhstan, Cyprus, Germany and Japan adore Irina's performances. Her skill rivals that of any maestro, gladdening the hearts of audiences. Her smiling expression and her passion for life speak for themselves.

Not long ago, Irina gave a concert in Minsk, heartily welcomed by the audience. Just beforehand, she chatted openly with us.

I always protest on hearing that instrumental music is not for everyone; I play for the widest audience. I graduated from the Conservatoire, playing Bach and Paganini, but always dreamt of playing my own compositions. As a result, I invented my own world, as I feel it. My guitar playing is now broadcast on the radio in Belarus and abroad, although it's difficult to appear on radio stations' playlists when you are playing instrumental pieces — especially of your own composition. Believe me.

Irina, you tour a great deal, even setting a record of performing in Japan 55 times. Is

instrumental music perceived the same everywhere?

It is very popular in Japan. People there are intrigued that a European is playing this music. I've been well accepted. I once saw young Japanese girls arriving at my concert with copies of my hairstyle. I didn't know how to react on seeing my 'clones' but I was later told that the girls were expressing their respect for me by emulating my style.

Many Belarusians and Russians live in Cyprus, so I've had no problems with understanding. I travelled to Cuba this year, improvising alongside Cubans. Their guitars were in extremely bad condition but they played them marvellously. Cubans are a very positive nation and cannot live without three things: rum, cigars and music. I still dream of performing in the centre of Havana, where there is a very beautiful square. Probably, I'll succeed. On returning home, I composed a melody in Cuban-Mexican style. Travels help me compose. I try to fix my impressions in music. In Kazakhstan, I once performed in an actual yurt, which housed a small concert hall. I wouldn't have believed it if I hadn't seen it with my own eyes. Such things stick in

the memory and live on in music.

When did you leave for Moscow?

Almost three years ago, although not because I felt uncomfortable here. Everything was fine for me in Minsk but, after one of the 'Listapad' film festivals, I was invited to Moscow to give a concert, at which I was noticed. Everything went from there and I now have an agent. I receive serious proposals and have given concerts in the Kremlin and at Moscow clubs. I'm enjoying my work. Misteria Zvuka company has released my album and signed a contract with me, which was a shock to everyone. The company never works with young artistes... but they believed in me.

Don't you have a producer?

No, I don't, but I do have a company which promotes my career for me.

Will you ever tire of pop music, returning to classical pieces?

It's quite possible. However, although pop music seems easy and light at first glance, it actually takes quite some time to record and arrange. I feel responsible for each note, having no doubt about how music should sound. I'm glad that my view coincides with that



Irina Ignatyuk strives to express herself through music

of listeners. My music is loved by accountants and taxi drivers alike, being lightly entertaining and relaxing. Not long ago I heard my 'Sunny Paradise' composition on the radio, while at a beauty salon. I was so pleased.

The papers once wrote: 'Irina Ignatyuk is a virtuoso guitarist'. However, I'm no virtuoso; I just perform beautiful melodies. My conservatoire education remains with me and I still love to go to concerts by great classical instrumentalist Yuri Bashmet. I love to listen to a good symphony orchestra. Saying that, I sometimes meet

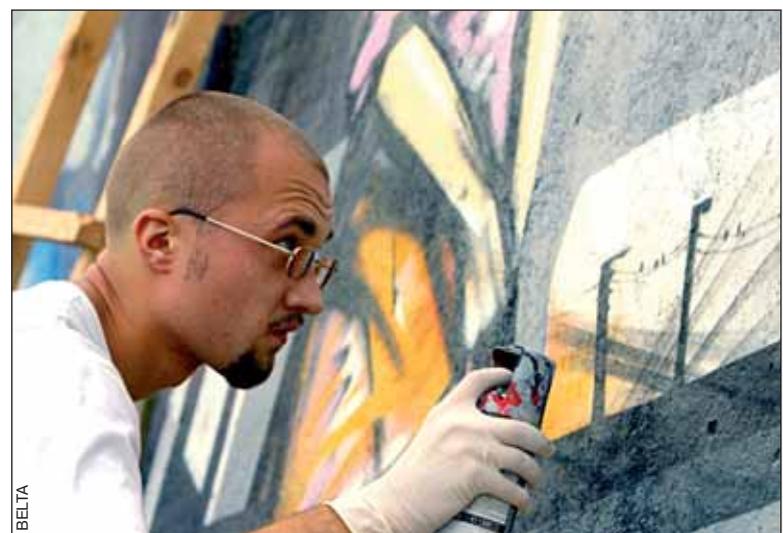
up with my father, in London, to go to an AC/DC concert for example.

Your father is a teacher of music. Does he give you advice?

Of course. He supports me in all my ideas, understanding me heart and soul. Funny things sometimes happen. I arrived in Japan and he asked me on the phone not how my journey had been (as the flight is so long) but when my sound check would be (laughing). It's really possible to move mountains, having such support.

By Piotr Vavilonsky

Young graffiti artists assisted in self-expression and creativity



Vitebsk's graffiti artists provided with an artistic site

By Olga Bogacheva

Vitebsk's graffiti artists gain chance to make their art legal

The regional centre has hosted the first open meeting of young artists, including representatives of local authorities and law enforcement agencies. About four dozen teenagers attended who

have been many times arrested by the police for leaving their 'artistry' on bus stops, walls and other city sites. Their graffiti is a true headache for Vitebsk citizens, who like to see their native city unadorned by spray paint. Their efforts require regular cleaning by city authorities.

It has been decided to give the

graffiti artists the chance to demonstrate their creativity via a contest, initiated by the First Deputy Chairman of the Vitebsk City Executive Committee, Vladimir Katashuk. The event is to coincide with City Day, on June 25th, with specific sites chosen for decoration by the entrants. Professional artists and lecturers from Vitebsk's Technological University will work with the teenagers and it's hoped that, if successful, such contests will be organised regularly.

The young graffiti artists have the chance to define the future of their hobby of 'street art'. This form of artistic self-expression is popular worldwide, being an independent genre of modern art and an integral part of urban culture. Many cities and countries have their own popular graffiti masters, whose works are acclaimed. "Some of the Vitebsk graffiti artists could find fame in our city via their artistry," notes Mr. Katashuk.

Ballerina combines artistry with charity

By Yekaterina Smelova

Hundreds of children from Belarusian orphanages and foster homes attend new show by Anastasia Volochkova



Anastasia Volochkova performs

The famous ballerina purchased a portion of the tickets for her Minsk performance to donate them to pupils from a Minsk orphanage, the Belarusian Children's Hospice and four foster homes. Additionally, students of the Belarusian Choreogra-

phy College and the Belarusian State University of Culture and Arts were invited to enjoy the performance. That evening, the star demonstrated many transformations, including a dying swan and Margarita. The fairy-tale characters and pirouettes were supplemented by charming music by Piotr Tchaikovsky and Edvin Marton, and songs by Édith Piaf and others. The diversity of styles made the show captivating, with Anastasia changing costume nine times, including before the eyes of the audience. On performing a passionate tango, she tore off her long red dress to leave a shorter black costume.

Applause completed the show, written for Anastasia by Lyubasha. The ballerina promised to return to Minsk, bringing her new charity programme: 'Anastasia Volochkova to Belarus' Children. "I love your capital dearly," the Honoured Artist of Russia stressed. "I always breathe easily and freely here. I anticipated this performance for a long time and hope that my artistry will help people, bringing them love and kindness."