

Never ending theatrical inspiration

28 student theatres arrive in Minsk from sixteen countries for *Teatralny Koufar* Festival

By Viktor Korbut

This year, the 8th International *Teatralny Koufar* Student Theatre Festival took place on a large scale, including teams from Brazil, Morocco, Israel and Georgia for the first time. The programme was rich in classical pieces — including works by Tennessee Williams and Shakespeare. There were even two Belarusian-language performances based on Yakub Kolas and Vladimir Korotkevich's works. Meanwhile, hundreds of theatre lovers attended master classes offered by Hungarian and Portuguese directors and actors.

The Lublin Culture Centre, of Poland, opened the event, staged in the Belarusian State University's courtyard, giving their global premiere of *Bio Object* — (a four hour synthesis stage mastery, choreography, music and, even, architecture).

The Festival's Director, Yekaterina Solodukha, stresses, "This year, *Teatralny Koufar* is being held for the eighth time, as if on an endless path to perfection. The figure

'8' is a reversed infinity sign — '∞'; moreover, the ancient Chinese saw eight as a lucky number. We hope this will bring success, as infinity implies depth; each performance has its own deep message."

This year, demand for tickets was such that the organisers decided to introduce fees at the symbolic price of about one Euro. Ms. Solodukha notes that the halls, while being large, cannot accommodate all those wishing to attend. "We have around four hundred participants who always come to performances. However, our sites at the Belarusian State University's Lyceum and the Palace of Trade Unions can accommodate only 200. Our experience shows that at least 500 people are eager to attend, with about half being disappointed."

The best performance was chosen by audience vote. The Festival's Art Director, Sergey Turban, summarises, "The level of our Festival was defined by good dramaturgy. Interestingly, many works focused on the fragile destiny of woman-kind, with spectators invited to attend discussion clubs as well as



Teatralny Koufar witnesses huge popularity this year

performances. This year, young foreign literary critics lectured: Claudio Fokinelli, of Italy, and Andrew Chippendale, from the UK. In addition, master classes were offered by Hungarian director Petar Fargo (*Intolerable Burden of Existence*) and Portuguese actor and jury member José Guerra

(*Theatri_X*)."

No doubt, the *Teatralny Koufar* Festival lived up to its excellent reputation. In 2012, Minsk is to host the 9th World Congress of the International University Theatre Association, from June 25th-29th, gathering troupes from 50 countries worldwide.

Romantic mood in urban landscape

By Valery Sidorenko

Minsk's City History Museum hosts personal exhibition of Israeli sculptor and designer Ruslan Sergeyev, featuring about 30 photographs of his sculptures

The *Design of Landscape Sentiments* exhibition showcases the master's unusual works. As the Charge d'Affaires Ad Interim of Israel to Belarus, Zvi Cohen-Litant, noted at the opening ceremony, the event opens an exhibition season by the Israeli Cultural Centre at the Embassy of Israel in Belarus. He added that Mr. Sergeyev — born in Belarus — is one of the leading sculptors and designers in Israel. In 1996, he opened a studio of landscape design in Jerusalem, creating small and large sized sculptures.

Mr. Sergeyev's multi-coloured pieces are made from metal, concrete and mosaics, perfectly suiting their surroundings and complementing nature, while introducing a romantic mood into urban living. His grasshoppers, lizards, starfish, snails and lions, which are almost brought alive by his dazzling mosaics and mirrored glass, are to be found all over Israel. Each has its own character, able to move in light and shadow.

This is the first exhibition hosted by Minsk's City History Museum, with the exhibits on show in the courtyard. This exclusive gallery is now wonderfully decorated.



Orchestra of Chinese masters opens Days of Chinese Culture in Belarus with national compositions

Learning more about each other through artistic performances

By Irina Yurkovskaya

Days of Chinese Culture in Belarus showcase diversity of national culture

A concert by an orchestra of Chinese national musical masters (performing music by Chinese composers) has gathered a full house at the Belarusian State Philharmonic Society, launching the Days of Chinese Culture in Belarus.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, the First Deputy Culture Minister, Vladimir Karachevsky, noted that the exchange of Days of Culture helps strengthen relations between Belarus and China. He stressed that, in recent years, such cultural forums have become true

gems in our co-operation. The Days have been organised since 1993 and, every year, become even more interesting. "Belarusian audiences' interest in these cultural events is growing," Mr. Karachevsky emphasised, adding that unique artistic teams arrive from China to demonstrate the magnificence of Chinese culture.

The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of China to Belarus, H.E. Mr. Lu Guicheng, noted in his speech that such cultural forums also help strengthen understanding between our nations. China and Belarus are geographically distant but their mutually beneficial collaboration is unhampered, as is our people's desire to be friends and learn

more about each other. "Each nation has its own national culture, which is part of the common treasury of global culture. Those of China and Belarus are part of this global culture," the Ambassador asserted.

The Days have allowed Belarusian audiences to enjoy the music, dancing and art of China. The Minsk State Linguistic University hosted a circus performance by Chinese artistes, in addition to national singing and dancing from Inner Mongolia — a Chinese region known for the diversity of Mongolian culture. Moreover, the *Chinese Ceramics and China and Modern Art of Chinese Textiles* exhibitions were organised as part of the Days of Culture.

Ice and white bear

Show to open new season at Belarusian State Circus

The unique artistes from Krivoi Rog have already toured widely, entertaining the public with their 'arctic' arena. Naturally, huge volumes of meat and fish have to be on hand for feeding the animals, although the brown bear is fed only on plants. The animals from the North are to demonstrate their artistry under the guidance of tamer Alexander Denisenko, an Honoured Artiste of Russia. The first half of the show will feature the *Crystal Revue* programme, with clowns, jugglers and

acrobats performing on skates.

This season, several surprises are in store, including a major programme devoted to Minsk Circus' 40th birthday — to be celebrated in February. The wonderful show is premiering this autumn, while our artistes are now touring Sochi, Latvia, Egypt and Singapore. The Circus Director's Assistant for Artistic Work, Vasily Kremenetsky, tells us that some new artistes may debut at these jubilee celebrations; they are now studying at Glinka College of Music's Circus Art Department.

Priorities of cultural policy come to the fore

National Library of Belarus' Labyrinth Gallery hosts first Republican exhibition of monumental art

The show is a retrospective of monumental art from across Belarus, featuring photos of monuments, stained glass windows and paintings. It aims to demonstrate the best monumental art pieces created over the past two decades within Belarus, which each represent the Belarusian national art school.

"The project continues last year's Republican exhibition of fine arts — *Land Under White Wings*," notes Cul-

ture Minister Pavel Latushko, adding, "Support for monumental art must be a priority of our cultural policy. We boast bright examples created by our people and the state, which can influence today's generations of Belarusians and those of the future."

In October, works by students and lecturers from the Belarusian State Arts Academy's Monumental-Decorative Art Department will go on show. Additionally, the educational establishment is to host a scientific-practical conference and a special edition devoted to Belarusian monumental art is to be published.