

# Live concerts at Minsk's city square

Interesting creativity of popular *DaVinci* band helps bring Belarus and Italy closer

By Viktor Korbut

Olga Ryzhikova and Denis Dudinsky are famous pop performers in Belarus, singing in Italian. The fruits of their creative activity regularly appear on the RAI Uno TV Channel, broadcast directly from Rome all over the globe. Moreover, songs by *DaVinci* band can be heard on 20 radio stations across Northern Italy. However, the band has no plans to leave for the Apennines, preferring to sing in a foreign language while remaining in their homeland.

**Tell us about yourselves: where do you come from and what are your goals?**

**Ms. Ryzhikova:** I was born in Minsk and I decided to enter a musical college when I was 16. I loved the atmosphere there, with students learning new pieces directly on the staircases, using various musical instruments. I was enchanted. I'm now studying at the Belarusian State University of Culture and Arts and trying to gain insight into arrangements and computer music.

**Mr. Dudinsky:** I was born in 1974 in Minsk, to a family of ordinary engineers. I attended a mathematical school and then entered the Institute of Foreign Languages; I'm a specialist in English and Italian.

**How did *DaVinci* band originate?**

**Ms. Ryzhikova:** We became acquainted at composer Leonid Shirin's studio, with each of us launching our own solo musical projects. I was singing in Russian and Denis in Italian.



ALEXANDER RYZHIKOVA

*DaVinci* among most unusual and original bands on Belarusian music scene

**Mr. Dudinsky:** Olga came to Mr. Shirin to record her song. At that time, I was closely liaising with Leonid and needed female backing vocals for our songs. Many singers were keen to take on the role but weren't suitable. Ryzhikova told us immediately: 'Boys, I'll stick with you!'

**Ms. Ryzhikova:** Leonid Shirin is our composer, musical arranger and muse; moreover, he plays the guitar perfectly. We've been working together for five years already. We're very lucky to have met Leonid, as all his songs are real hits. He won't rest on the laurels though; he constantly seeks new challenges. We became friends in the first minutes of our acquaintance and have never argued about musical

material in our two years together.

**Mr. Dudinsky:** For example, if I don't like a song, Leonid says: 'Ok' and writes a new composition. He has the most delicate sense of humour and huge experience.

**You only sing live, don't you? Is it a principle of yours?**

**Mr. Dudinsky:** Yes, I'm well-known for speaking against lip-synching. Once, a famous band fell on its face during a live broadcast, when the host asked them to perform a song without lip-synch. I was sitting in the studio and rubbing my hands with pleasure. Such artists need to be exposed!

**Do you think your band is popular, since you're per-**

**forming in Italy?**

**Mr. Dudinsky:** How do you define popularity...is it being invited to sing abroad? Most performers are invited to sing abroad. It's too early to get above ourselves.

**Ms. Ryzhikova:** As we're often played on Italian radio and television, we're usually asked why we don't leave for the Apennines. I don't understand why I need to move somewhere, as I feel comfortable in Belarus. I live comfortably and can realise my potential here. We have a beautiful country.

**How have you managed to gain Italian airing?**

**Ms. Ryzhikova:** We were working only with Northern Italy, co-operating with a producer from Milan — Denis'

old friend. He organised concerts for us in Bergamo, not far from Venice, and in an ordinary city square in Milan. We don't claim to be great or famous. Our lyrics are about the eternal theme of love — poignant for us all.

**Critics say that your lyrics are rather superficial. Don't you want to be more serious?**

**Mr. Dudinsky:** The sense is light, as we use three words which easily rhyme: cuore — heart, dolore — suffering and amore — love.

**Do Belarusians and Italians have much in common?**

**Ms. Ryzhikova:** Belarusians are like Italians, but less lucky in their climate. Italians smile more, as they have plenty of sunshine. If we had more

sunny days, we'd have a more open soul and would be more emotional.

**Where do you like to travel: through Belarus or Italy?**

**Mr. Dudinsky:** You can always return to Venice. However, as soon as I have any opportunity, I think: 'I've already visited Venice. I should see something else'. In this case, I set off to travel through Belarus.

**Ms. Ryzhikova:** I'd like to visit Nesvizh. They say this Belarusian town was constructed by Italians back in the 16th century. Although it's located not far from Minsk, we always fail to find time for a trip, because of our constant tours.

**If you had failed in music, what path would you have chosen in life?**

**Mr. Dudinsky:** I don't know. It's difficult to look into the past and imagine 'what if?' I'd probably have turned to journalism or have taught foreign languages at school or university.

**Ms. Ryzhikova:** I'm doing what I truly want to: working at a radio station and at Leonid Shirin's musical studio, while performing with the 'DaVinci' band and studying at university. It's enough for me just now. My dreams are coming true. We shouldn't voice our dreams, but I'd like to shoot in a film.

**Denis, how is your cinema career?**

**Mr. Dudinsky:** It can't be called a cinema career; rather, it's my hobby. I'm sometimes invited to take a cameo role but I'm not going into the cinema industry. Music is my life.

## Love wins the day



A scene from *Dog in the Manger*

By Olga Gumileva

***Dog in the Manger* musical comedy (from Spanish Lope de Vega's script) premiered at one of Belarus' newest theatres: the Belarusian Army Drama Theatre**

One of the best classical performances worldwide — *Dog in the Manger* — was written almost four centuries ago. Belarusian Army Drama Theatre Artistic Director Alexey Dudarev admitted at a

general rehearsal that he has greatly reinterpreted the play, though carefully preserving Lope de Vega's plot and major themes. "The performance is somehow different, being of a new genre and boasting a different approach," he said. "At present, all medieval classical pieces require this. It's impossible to stage *Hamlet* in the form in which it was originally created. It's a different time now, with different relations and speeds. However, we must preserve and stage

plays written by great authors, preserving Lope de Vega and Chekhov."

Director Marina Dudareva and playwright Alexey Dudarev have managed to unite hot sunny Italy and our Slavonic winter in their play. Composer Vladimir Kondrusevich has written an original score, while classical pieces by Vivaldi, Mozart and, even, an Italian lute are included.

This cheerful and funny performance, with a simple plot, retains suspense, with serious dialogue. "The theme deals with an ordinary miracle: that of love. Different paths lead to it but the end is the same: the union of two hearts," asserts Ms. Dudareva.

The message of the performance is that love wins through; being true, it destroys all obstacles. The comedy tells us about life which is bright, joyful, well costumed, full of songs, dancing, sun and love...

## Avant-garde and classics reflected precisely in glass

By Yelena Stasyukevich

**Creativity of glass blowers from various artistic schools on show in Grodno**

The Neman Wave exhibition is showcasing the results of Belarus' first International Blown Glass Symposium, with works from the Baltic, Russian, Belarusian and Western glass blowing schools. Each demonstrates various glass techniques, including classical and avant-garde.

The joint creative activities of 24 glass blowing artists from Russia, Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia, Hungary and Belarus are on show at Grodno's exhibition hall. Later the show will travel to Polotsk, before going to the Modern Fine Arts Museum in Minsk.

The International Blown



BELTA

Works from different glass blowing schools on show

Glass Symposium was hosted by Neman Glassworks in the Grodno Region's Berezhovka for a fortnight: from late October to early November, organised by the Modern Fine Arts Museum and the Belarusian Union of Artists, with assistance from the Culture Ministry. The forum aimed to

promote Belarusian glass blowing while preserving its legacy and best traditions. Moreover, the event supported artistic contacts between masters, since artists could share their experience. They also took part in master classes for spectators and glass industry workers.