

Dancing to Prokofiev, Rimsky-Korsakov and Stravinsky music

Andris Liepa has special relations with Belarus

By Victor Andreev

Last year, People's Artist of Russia Andris Liepa presented performances from *Russian Seasons* at Minsk's Bolshoi Theatre. It appeared to be one-off event but, immediately

Minsk stage by the Bolshoi and Mariinsky theatres' best artistes, as well as by the Kremlin Ballet. *Dedication to Dyagilev* featured People's Artist of Russia Farukh Ruzimatov. *Scheherazade* was staged at the Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre of Bela-

tre date from the 1980s, when he rehearsed with Belarusian ballet master Valentin Yelizariiev on local stages. Yelizariiev trained Liepa for an international contest in the USA, after which the young dancer began a rapid ascent to

caught me by the tail, as if I were a fire-bird. He said that I should think about staging permanent performances in Minsk. I must admit that I don't have enough time to bring to life all my ideas but I promised to think over his



Andris Liepa fixes his sights on Belarusian audience

herazade and *The Firebird*.

Russian Seasons features music by Prokofiev, Rimsky-Korsakov and Igor Stravinsky. According to Mr. Liepa, it's essential that the best traditions of classical art are preserved, based upon the centenary

low Dyagilev's *Seasons*."

The performances staged in Paris by Sergey Dyagilev in the early 20th century are sure to appeal to Belarusians, as there are many fans of Russian ballet among them. Moreover, the Belarusian ballet school borrows greatly from the Russian. It's symbolic that Liepa continues the traditions begun by Dyagilev; his father Maris was a pupil of Serge Lifar — a dancer who performed *Russian Seasons* in Paris. Sets are designed following photos and recollections of the originals, reconstructed by Russian artists Anna and Anatoly Nezhnye. The latter is also a chief artist with the State Kremlin Palace.

Russian Seasons is supported at the highest level, with Belarus' Culture Ministry offering its help. Pavel Latushko believes that the event is an 'example of preserving our historical and cultural legacy through the modern efforts of the world community'. Mr. Liepa sees major prospects for Minsk's cycle of *Russian Seasons*.

"Belarus is a bridge between Russia and Europe, Moscow and Paris. Belarusian audiences will be among the first to see the very best from the creative laboratory of *Russian Seasons*. After Minsk, Dyagilev's performances are to tour Russia."



Andris Liepa sees great prospects in Minsk cycle of *Russian Seasons*

after his European tour, Andris returned to Belarus. This October saw him bringing performances such as *Tamar*, *Bolero* and *Dedication to Dyagilev* to Belarus, with which he has had special relations back from Soviet times.

The ballets of *Tamar* and *Bolero* were performed on the

rus, as was *Tamar*, featuring Honoured Artistes of Russia Alexandra Timofeyeva and Ilya Kuznetsov singing the leading arias. Meanwhile, People's Artiste of Russia Ilze Liepa — a prima of the Bolshoi Theatre — played the role of a dancer in *Bolero*.

Andris Liepa's liaisons with Minsk's Bolshoi Thea-

stardom, as did his father Maris.

Arriving in Minsk last month, Liepa confirmed that he feels at home in the city. He chatted with the Director of the National Academic Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre, Vladimir Gridyushko, and tells us, "Mr. Gridyushko

invitation. It's too early to speak about a schedule of future performances, but if technical opportunities of stages in other Belarusian cities allow us, audiences in regional centres will be able to see *Russian Seasons* performances," notes Mr. Liepa. Last year, Minsk had the chance to see *Sche-*

old Parisian performances of Sergey Dyagilev.

"Many theatres have today moved to contemporary technologies, which detract from the pure joy of human movement; there are so many metal constructions and light-emitting diode screens on stage. A true Russian ballet should fol-

Chagall in Jerusalem

The *In Chagall's Footsteps* exhibition is dedicated to the life and creativity of one of the most prominent Belarus-born painters

To mark the 125th anniversary of his birth next year, a show is opening at Jerusalem's Arts Centre, organised by the Association of Professional Artists of Israel, with assistance from the Belarusian Embassy.

Belarus has donated several artefacts, including Svetlana Gorbunova's *Recollections on My House* sculpture, which graces the Belarusian diplomatic mission building and depicts young Marc Chagall. Belarusian artists Vladimir Naprienko and Vladimir Prokoptsov's works devoted to Chagall are also to go on show.



ARTUR BRUPAS

Fairytale and reality hand in hand

By Yelena Gubareva

Residence of forest spirit opens in Polotsk District

According to folk beliefs, forest spirits can change their form and can be both kind and angry. Towards travellers who have lost their way, he may appear as a careful lesovichok (male woodland spirit in Slavic mythology who protects wild animals and forests). To poachers,

he is a pitiless hobgoblin. The spirit's purpose is to protect all living things, inspiring it to reside in the forest.

A special residence has now been created for the magical creature, with a diverse selection of guests invited to attend a 'housewarming': among them, amateur artists were joined by cultural workers from across the Vitebsk Region.

Piotr Petkevich, Deputy Chair-

man of the Polotsk District Executive Committee, notes that the forest spirit has serious responsibilities, so will be an honorary guest at all holidays and country contests — such as for mushroom and berry picking and archery. Moreover, the forest spirit will visit schools and kindergartens to teach children how to care for nature and animals. Unlike our New Year characters, he plans to work all year round.

Commemorating fellow countryman

Maxim Bogdanovich's bust to be unveiled in Grodno to honour 120th anniversary of his birth

The necessary documentation has been elaborated, with a competition to be announced for the best design. The site has already been chosen: the city park named after

Zhiliber — near his former family home.

Maxim Bogdanovich spent his childhood in the city over the River Nieman, from 1892 to 1896. Sadly, his mother died, being buried in Grodno. Since 1986, the Bogdanovich's former family home has housed the literary department of Grodno's

State History and Archaeology Museum; since 1995, it has been known as the Maxim Bogdanovich Museum. It keeps personal possessions of the poet and his family, as well as documents, letters and collection of verse, including *Vyanok* (Wreath), released in 1913 — in the poet's lifetime.