

Dance helps us perceive life anew

D.O.Z.SK.I Contemporary Choreography Theatre from Minsk wins two awards at 24th International Festival of Modern Choreography (IFMC) in Vitebsk, interpreting dance in a new way

By Vasilisa Petroschenko

The national competition of contemporary choreography brought together eight groups: two from Vitebsk, two from Grodno, three from Minsk and one from Mogilev. Headed by People's Artist of the USSR and Belarus Valentin Yelizariyev, the jury recognised D.O.Z.SK.I's *About Ballet* (staged by Dmitry Zalessky) for 'Best Performance' and 'Best Technical Mastery'. In the first nomination, the jury assessed the idea and artistic concept, as well as the skills of the choreographer and performers. In the second, the technical level and artistry of the company was judged. The 'Best Performance' diploma is the equal of a Grand Prix.

Two years ago, D.O.Z.SK.I claimed the same victory — at the 22nd International Festival of Modern Choreography. Two of its one-act ballets won diplomas in the 'Best Performance' category: *Rock-Paper-Scissors* and *Homo Sapiens*, staged by Dmitry Zalessky and Olga Skvortsova-Kovalskaya.

The Minsk group has won several international awards to date, organised as part of the IFMC. In 2008, it took first prize in the 'One-Act Ballet' nomination for *Maturity* while, in 2010, Dmitry Zalessky was given first place in the 'Choreography Miniature' nomination

— for

Nothing in Common. Last year, he also received the Yevgeny Panfilov Award, given to the best choreographer at an international event.

Translation, staged by the Vitebsk Culture Centre Studio's Diana Yurchenko, Sergey Tolkach and Marina Kushnerova, won the 'Choreographer' nomination, while soloists from the Belarusian State University of Culture and Arts' Choreography Department — Alexander Filippov and Alla Pogodskaya — won the 'Artistry' nomination for *Let's Remember*.

The jury awarded Vlad Tereshchenko's *Liber-Tango* project (Grodno) in the 'Post Scriptum' nomination, 'For Purity of Style'. Meanwhile, *Loneliness*, performed by Mogilev's *Alesya*, won a diploma 'For Expression and Sincerity'.

The forum is the first festival of contemporary dance within the former USSR



Dancing is major attraction at Vitebsk Festival

and is considered to be one of the most prestigious in the sphere of modern choreography in the CIS and Europe.

At this year's the Spanish and Canadian presented unexpected 'hybrids': mixing break and hip-hop with classical ballet and contrary trends. Car-Rubberbandance which headed the festival, gave of *Gravity* (90 minutes). Their free inter-pairs, solos and on the topic vulner-

pled our age of consumption. We can communicate in so many ways — by phone, Skype, Twitter and VKontakte — yet often lack fundamental values. Montreal choreographer Victor Quijada cries out for 'something to be done' and assures us that only art can encourage us to comprehend and act. He may be right.

Spanish dancers Alvaro Esteban and Elias Aguirre chose the insect world to parallel that of human existence in *Entomo*, comparing the pointless banality of insect behaviour with that of the 'petty bourgeois' of the 19th

century and today's robotic culture of consumerism.

The Surrender, by the Yevgeny Panfilov Ballet Company, was the festival's 'dancing crescendo'.

Dance expert Larisa Barykina muses, "The performance shows the world on the verge of disaster. In fact, some would view that as optimistic. I think we are inevitably falling into the chasm. Surrender is always humiliating and we have already surrendered to vulgarity in all its alluring and disgusting forms. We have surrendered to greyness. The rebellion of the masses, of which Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset warned us, has occurred and God has stopped governing the world's fate — whatever humanity believes." Many of the performances were far from joyful.

Dmitry Zalessky adds, "I'm glad that the Spanish company was invited this year, as they are a good example of modern choreography and expressive mime. Our D.O.Z.SK.I Theatre is in synch with European trends and is soon to give a joint, powerful, modern performance with the Polish Zawirowania Dance Theatre, at the Belarusian Drama Theatre in Minsk."



Modern interpretation of ballet classical pieces kindly appreciated at 24th International Festival of Modern Choreography

Cultural traditions revived with new strength

By Nadezhda Radionova

Cultural Capital of Belarus 2012 project sees over 20 events organised in Nesvizh

Theatre is to play a great role in the cultural year, as Belarus' first amateur court theatre appeared in Nesvizh in the mid-18th century. Now, its glorious traditions are continued by the Ursula Radziwill Theatre of the District Centre of Culture and Leisure. It is to present various performances to guests of the cultural capital, with some staged at the palace and park estate. *The Nights of the Bolshoi Theatre in Nesvizh*

Castle promises to be unforgettable while the *Theatrical Meetings* Festival will bring together numerous theatrical companies.

The Nation Blesses with Word and Action cultural event is to mark the 450th anniversary of the first printed books in Belarusian — published by Nesvizh's printing house. The forum will include a scientific-practical conference, exhibitions of rare editions from the museum archive and theatrical performances.

The traditional *Muses of Nesvizh* holiday of arts won't go unnoticed, enjoying deserved popularity among



Roman Catholic Church, in Nesvizh

Nesvizh residents and tourists. International Children's Day will see the National Musical Art Centre organising events, while the regional *Moving in Step with Time*

youth action will be devoted to International Youth Day.

Nesvizh hopes to see many guests for its folk holidays of Kolyadki, Maslenitsa, Zazhinki and Dozhinki, while

the *Nesvizh Fest* is scheduled for April. This will feature *Straw Wonders* — celebrating straw weaving, alongside *Play, Harmonica and Folklore Toloka* holidays. Works made by young artists at open air workshops are to go on show at the *Colours of Native Land* exhibition.

The town views its status as the cultural capital of Belarus in 2012 as a well-deserved honour. From the 17th-19th century, Nesvizh was one of the largest cultural centres in Europe, where the best composers of Italy, France and Germany performed. Moreover, Belarus' professional musical and theatri-

cal art originates from there. Nesvizh Castle is registered on the UNESCO World Heritage List, alongside Farny Roman Catholic Church and the Town Hall.

The *Cultural Capital of Belarus* action was launched in early 2010, aiming to celebrate the best achievements of national culture countrywide, while promoting the work of regional cultural institutions and local authorities and raising interest among tourists. In 2010, Polotsk was Belarus' first cultural capital, followed by Gomel in 2011. Professional dance and musical groups are invited to perform during the year.