

# Angel's song conquers hearts

Lida Zablotzkaya reaches top three at *Junior Eurovision* while entrants for adult *Eurovision-2012* Song Contest in Baku are chosen

By Viktor Andreev

Young Belarusian Lida Zablotzkaya was confidently approaching first place at *Junior Eurovision* in Yerevan. However, during the television vote, Belarus awarded the most points to our major rivals, the Dutch and Georgians, placing them ahead. Such are the rules of the show and, of course, you can't vote for your own candidate.

Lida has now returned to her native Mogilev from Armenia with a worthy third place and is pleased with her result. Before departing for Yerevan, the eighth grade pupil hoped to be among the leaders. In fact, she earned 99 points, admitting, "My dream has come true and I'm now among the top three in Europe."

Lida has been involved in music since fourth grade, playing the piano and polishing her singing at Vdokhnoveniye Studio. Who knows, triumph at adult *Eurovision* may lie

girls from Georgia with a lively song and routine. Lidia tells us, "My song — *Angels of Goodness* — is slow; more lively songs tend to win." She reveals however, "I'm a playful angel of kindness, keen on adventures. I enjoy performing and making people smile. I'm a cheerful and positive person."

Belarus has twice won first place at *Junior Eurovision*: in 2005 — Ksenia Sitnik; and in 2009 — Alexey Zhigalkovich. In 2006, Russia won and Belarusian Andrey Kunets came second.

On the eve of the event, the Belarusian potential entrants for the adult *Eurovision* were chosen, hoping to perform in Baku in 2012. After a TV performance, the public will select their favourite five candidates. In late December-early January, during a live broadcast on Belarus-1 TV Channel, the final winner will be announced.

The professional jury has chosen 15 entrants to compete for the honour: *Thriller*, *Litesound*, *Nuteki*, *The Champions*, *Ekivoki*, Gyunesh, Anastasia Vinnikova,



Gyunesh ready to perform at *Eurovision-2012*

ahead.

First place at *Junior Eurovision* was won by a group of

Yuzari, Anna Blagova, German, duo Alexandra Gaiduk and Natalia Baldina, Yan Zhenchak and *Outerplan*, Ale-



Lida Zablotzkaya pleased with her participation in *Junior Eurovision*

na Lanskaya, Aura, and Victoria Aleshko.

I visited the auditions at the Youth Variety Theatre to see what we might expect.

## Fair casting

Over two days, the authoritative jury chose the top 15 entrants out of 114 applicants. Seeing the performances, I was assured that talent played the major role in the decision making, rather than personal sympathy or antipathy.

It seemed as if all our main pop stars were at the audition, including those who have tried out previously for junior and adult *Eurovision*. Anastasia Vinnikova sang again, despite her failure at *Eurovision* this year in Düsseldorf. Meanwhile, Gyunesh Abasova entered the

stage in white, giving her fifth attempt for *Eurovision* with *And Morning Will Come*, filling the hall with positive emotions, rather in the style of American Cher. The lyrics and music were written by Azerbaijani composers, who brought victory to Azerbaijani duo Ell and Nikki this year. Gyunesh was the first to earn applause at *EuroFest*.

Although I'm not a fan of *Litesound*, their *We Are Heroes*, *We Are Winners* astonished everyone. *Nuteki* band also gave a fantastic performance of *Super Heroes*.

Each of the entrants brought their own flavour to the audition but, of course, only one can finally be chosen. Dmitry Baranov, Executive Producer of Belarus-1 TV Channel and Head of the *Euro-*

*vision-2012* project, guarantees that the choice will be made fairly and with transparency.

I also enjoyed Yuzari — our 'hybrid' of Justin Timberlake and Michael Jackson. He was a backing singer for Anastasia Vinnikova in Düsseldorf and tried to 'climb the peaks' at *New Wave-2011*, but is yet to experience real success. Judging by Inna Afanasieva's attentive glances and the amount of applause from the jury and the public, the young singer is using his experience to become bolder and brighter.

Needless to say, an artiste should be memorable and charismatic, like the winners of previous *Eurovision* contests Dmitry Bilan and Alexander Rybak. Many in Belarus can sing and dance well but

there are few truly charismatic artistes — and not everyone can work brilliantly regardless of their mood. According to Alexander Tikhonovich, the Head of *EuroFest*, a professional artiste with experience is needed to worthily represent Belarus at an international competition like *Eurovision*. He explains, "This is a really tough contest, involving blood, sweat and tears. In the finals, the tension makes your hair curl. It's easy to get stage fright. Some can manage while others lose their self-possession, being overwhelmed by excitement."

Of course, professionals never show that something is wrong, either in their soul or face. They have only one shot at winning the *Eurovision* Song Contest.

## Stylish and creative headgear on show

### Her Majesty's Hat city contest of creative works organised in Gomel

A major show of headgear was recently held in Pionersky Public Garden on City Day. The wonderful creations were made by school teachers and their pupils, as well as by members of needlecraft groups from the Novobelitsky, Sovetsky and Zheleznodorozhny districts, and by those from the Central district's Out-of-School Activity Centre Fashion Theatre.

In total, 87 pieces by young masters and their teachers went on show, quite taking visitors' breath away with their splendid and extravagant parade of invention and artistic mastery.

"The organisation of similar creative competitions by educational institutions and out-of-school activity centres is a good tradition," stresses Olga Antonenko, chief specialist of the Gomel City Executive Committee's Education Department. "We used to organise contests for the best costume, to mark City Day and other significant events of local and regional scale. We'd see medieval, Slavonic and national costumes, as well as those on eco themes. Then, we had the idea of celebrating creative headgear."

The Gomel regional department of the Belarusian Peace Foundation — a co-founder of the competition — awarded prizes.

## Classical genre in puppet theatre

By Yelena Stasyukevich

### Grodno's Regional Puppet Theatre — Belarus' oldest theatrical stage — prepares its 100th premiere

The stage fantasy, based upon Gogol's *Viy* — *Fearful Revenge*, has been written by the theatre's chief director, Oleg Zhyugzhda, and is aimed at teenagers and adults, rather than children, as was its 1st premiere.

It's no accident that Gogol has been chosen for the anniversary. The director, who was shocked by the play in his childhood, has long dreamt of adapting it for puppets. Of course, various interpretations are widespread across the stages of Russia and Ukraine. *Viy*



Puppets ready for premiere

is being staged at Grodno's Puppet Theatre with few special effects, and features both large and small puppets, with masks and costumes changed as necessary. Naturally, the actors and delicate set design also have a vital role to play.

The performance will be the last premiere on the old stage of Belarus' first theatre. In the middle of the 31st season, the theatre will close for reconstruction, with performances moving to the small stage of the Regional Drama Theatre. The

Puppet Theatre is currently housed by a building which is part of the Gorodnitsa Architectural and Town-Planning Complex. It was built by Grodno's headman, Duke Antoni Tyzenhauz, in 1760-1780, and has hosted three puppet theatres to date. It has been a contemporary theatre since 1980, with a repertoire of over 35 performances for children, youngsters and adults. It relies on synthesising classical and modern stage art, with puppets of various types used, easily combined with acting skills. The theatrical company successfully tours Poland, France and Germany and their performances have been awarded numerous prizes at prestigious foreign festivals and contests.