

All tickets sold out a month in advance

Mogilev is wrapped in Melpomene's arms, hosting 7th International *M@rt.contact* Youth Theatre Forum

By Konstantin Mishin

Never before has the festival enjoyed such a diverse programme, boasting performances by 17 theatrical companies: from Poland, Russia, Ukraine, Lithuania, Israel, Germany, Slovenia and Belarus. The repertoire included classical works, such as Chekhov's *Three Sisters* — staged by the Theatre-Studio from St. Petersburg, and contemporary works — many of which have been written by famous authors. The Maxim Gorky National Academic Drama Theatre (Minsk) staged Mikhail Zadornov's *Notes of a Tired Dreamer*.

As you might expect, young playwrights distinguished themselves via various genres, giving unexpected interpretations. The first evening saw well-known

Scarlet Sails staged as a musical by the Svobodnoe Prostranstvo State Theatre for Children and Young People from Orlov (Russia). Meanwhile, the Mysterin Theatre from Jerusalem also prepared a surprise, staging *Dreams of Moses* as a plastic performance.

The Slovenian KUD LJUD Theatre also made a bright name for itself, seeking out new theatrical forms while cultivating interaction from its audience. The troupe 'shocked' the public with their amusing 'devilry' — for which it's difficult to pin down a title. Ugly characters, painted in pink shades, crowded the hall and began to kiss ladies' hands, grasp young girls' legs and jump on chair backs. All these antics aroused surprise and cheerful laughter, showing that the young actors had



St. Petersburg Theatre presents *Three Sisters* at *M@rt.contact* Festival, winning Grand Prix

certainly achieved their goal.

The festival included not only performances but numerous press conferences, round table discussions and meetings with theatre figures, critics, art experts and spectators. Many famous theatre personalities gave master classes — such as Honoured Figure of Arts of Russia Yuri Vasiliev, and Vyacheslav Inozemtsev, who heads Minsk's Inzhest Physical Theatre.

Belarus' Culture Minister, Pavel Latushko, highly praised Mogilev residents for their ef-

forts at developing the festival movement. The *M@rt.contact* Festival has a distinct identity which is gaining in popularity. In past years, the performances at the youth forum have enjoyed audiences of almost 30,000, showing the success of this cultural event.

The Grand Prix of the International *M@rt.contact* Youth Theatre Forum has been awarded to *Three Sisters* (based on Chekhov's play of the same title), staged by the Small Drama Theatre from St. Petersburg. According to the

festival's jury, despite its contemporary interpretation, the performance retains 'Chekhov's atmosphere' and is being called a theatrical 'discovery'. Konstantin Shelestun, an actor with the Small Drama Theatre, has won 'best male role' while his colleague, Maria Semenova, has taken the prize for 'best young actress'.

Cazimir Liske and Odin Lund Biron, of the Independent Theatre Project (Moscow), were named 'best young actors' at the festival for their roles in a fairytale-parable for

adults and children, based on Shel Silverstein's *Lafcadio*. The performance also won the People's Choice Award.

The junior jury gave a special prize — 'For Courageous Stage Directing' — to director Yekaterina Averkova, for her *Owner of a Coffee-Shop* monologue, staged by the Mogilev Regional Drama Theatre.

Theatregoers had bought every available ticket for this year's performances a whole month before the artistes arrived.

Sculptors present creativity

By Veronika Gromova

Around 100 artistes take part in *Contemporary Belarusian Sculpture: 21st Century* album

"Work on the album has taken 18 months, comprising the creativity of sculptors and other young artists, each of whom has made their own contribution to the edition and its concept. Moreover, the sculptors have presented photos of their creations," notes Yekaterina Aksenova, the co-author and compiler of the photo album. She is also the Deputy Director of the Petrus Brovka Belarusian Encyclopaedia Publishing House.

According to the Chairman of the Belarusian Artists' Union's Sculpture Section, Sergey Logvin, the edition contains works by almost every Belarusian sculptor. "The photo album gives us an idea of sculpture from the past two decades. Readers will be able to discover the artists behind any sculptural work they look



A bronze female passenger at railway station in Molodechno

up, each in the designated genre," he adds.

A thousand copies of the *Contemporary Belarusian Sculpture: 21st Century* album have been released: in Belarusian, Russian and English. This should expand its readership. The book has 358 pages showing monu-

mental, easel, memorial and public garden sculptures: a diverse wealth of contemporary Belarusian art which shows great expressiveness. The edition also contains bibliographic data on each sculptor, including their personal websites and email contacts.

According to the Director of the Museum of Modern Fine Arts of Belarus, Natalia Sharangovich, who wrote the preface for the book, our Belarusian sculptors are preserving their traditions of realism and expressiveness — as developed by their predecessors. "However, over the past decade, abstract sculptors have also begun to make their name, deviating from traditional styles. Their innovation is their way of expressing their views on 20th century conflict," she notes.

The *Contemporary Belarusian Sculpture: 21st Century* album is the second edition in the *Contemporary Belarusian Art* series by the Petrus Brovka Belarusian Encyclopaedia Publishing House. Two years ago, the first volume was launched, proving popular; it is soon to be reprinted. The series will be continued later this year with *Contemporary Belarusian Decorative-and-Applied Art: 21st Century* and *Contemporary Belarusian Graphics: 21st Century*.

Exhibition moves from London to Maldon

Ancient Belarusian costumes tour UK

Women's ancient Belarusian costumes from the late 19th-early 20th century and national rushniks are now on show in the town of Maldon in Essex.

The opening ceremony was attended by the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Belarus to the UK, H.E. Mr. Alexander Mikhnevich, alongside local councillors and representatives of political and business circles, and cultural and art figures from the UK.

At present, Belarus and Britain are negotiating the establishment of twin town relations between Brest and Maldon. In April and May, the ancient Belarusian costumes and rushniks will continue touring English and Welsh towns.

Initially, the exhibition opened in London, where it aroused wide interest, in-



Rushniks from exhibition

cluding among politicians, entrepreneurs and foreign diplomats. The British were viewing the ancient costumes for the first time. Of course, they are a bright reflection of Belarusian culture.