

He was a childhood fidget but grew up with music

Belarusian representative at *Slavonic Bazaar* Festival interested in philosophy, teaches children singing and loves freestyle wrestling



Yevgeny Slavich

This year, the qualification event for the Vitebsk festival was less interesting than in previous years, as many of those performing required some polish. The contest places singing ability over all else — unlike *Eurovision*, where the overall team organisation, performance and, even, promotion play their part. In Vitebsk, singing is all. The international professional jury assesses singers and delivers its verdict: this is an artiste worthy of attention.

Over the years, talents such as Ruslana, Željko Joksimović and Svetlana Slavkovich have performed in Vitebsk, joined by honoured singers of Belarus Irina Dorofeeva and Alena Lanskaya. Meanwhile, Max Lorens (Sapatkov), Piotr Yelfimov, Natalia Podolskaya, Polina Smolova, Gunesh, Victoria Aleshko, Georgy Koldun launched their careers at the *Slavonic Bazaar*.

This year, both the jury and journalists assessing the performance of the semi-final eight decided that at least a year of preparation is needed before the event, as many of the singers were still 'raw'. Their time may come in the future. Some of the youngsters at the casting may yet become successful, but they need to work hard to 'polish' their talent.

Yevgeny Slavich, a first year student at the Belarusian State University of Culture and Arts, was an obvious favourite. We asked him about his training for the competition, his winning techniques, how to charm the audience and how he views his chances in this prestigious competition.

Yevgeny, did you expect to be representing the country at the *Slavonic Bazaar's* young performers' contests?

I believed that I'd be noticed. This wasn't connected with ex-

House of Arts since the age of 15, although I tended to fidget when younger, so it was difficult to make me focus. However, time passed and I understood that music and the stage are for

years intervened. People had to rebuild their lives, working hard to provide for their families, so he had no chance of becoming a great singer. In fact, I'm named after him. I do feel that I should

ent?

My mother, who is a pianist. She currently works as a concertmaster, teaching at the School of Arts in Cherven. I also teach singing there now, with

will influence my victory in the 'Slavonic Bazaar'.

Will you sing these in Vitebsk?

The songs are not yet confirmed. In the semi-final, I sang 'White Church' (Oleg Molchan's music and Alexander Legchilov's lyrics). I realised it was a good choice on hearing the reaction of the audience during the performance. My second song was 'The Way to the Light' (music by Raymond Pauls and lyrics by Ilya Reznik). Going on stage, I felt that the jury and the audience would like me, which gave me more confidence.

What was the reaction of students from your year and from your neighbours in the student dormitory on hearing that you are taking part in the competition in Vitebsk?

Many are happy for me, as my friends support me greatly.

You're interested in philosophy, aren't you?

I like to read books containing the wisdom of various people but don't have much time for books just now. My creative work is taking my time, although I sometimes freestyle wrestle.

Tell us about your hometown.

Although my passport states that I was born in Lyuban, I was actually born in Shklov; it's a mistake. We lived in Shklov briefly before moving to Cherven when I was very small. It's my real hometown and is very beautiful and smart, as well as being home to kind and friendly people. I hope that their support will help me to achieve success at the 'Slavonic Bazaar in Vitebsk'.

By Yekaterina Moreva



Vitebsk ready and waiting for *Slavonic Bazaar-2012*

pectations, but with hard work to truly present myself on stage. While studying at Minsk State College of Arts, for my 'Mastery in Variety and Vocal Skills' speciality, I met a wonderful professor and composer, Yelena Atrashkevich. She influenced me greatly as a singer. I'd taken singing lessons at the Children's

me. My performances at school parties and summer camp concerts helped me, as I saw how people listened to me.

Surely, you've inherited your talent from someone?

Yes, my grandfather sang very well. He could have made a good career from this but the war and difficult post-war

make the most of my singing opportunities, since he could not. I began by entering the 'Young Talents of Belarus' contest (organised by Belteleradiocompany), the 'BelAZ Accord' and the Festival of Songs and Poetry in Molodechno.

Who else has helped you to develop your musical tal-

five pupils: one boy and four girls. Of course, Ms. Atrashkevich, who is still my teacher, helps me; I'm very grateful to her. Her 'Snowstorm', 'Musician' and 'Beloved Mine' are my most favourite of her songs. I only sing songs which have meaning, as they are most memorable. I think a wise selection of songs

Raising artists here

Kindling creative fire in young talent is the task of Apollon art studio at Lyakhovich House of Culture

The studio is directed by Sergey Cherenovich — a member of the Belarusian Union of Artists and the Belarusian Union of Designers, and winner of five republican competitions in book illustration.

Children not only study at the art studio but make trips to Nesvizh, Mir, Minsk and the old estates of the Lyakhovich District, participating in competitions, including those of an international nature. Impressively, Vyacheslav Smirnov won a gold medal at the



The work of Nastya Dyro from Lyakhovich — *Collective Farm Household of Future Agro-town*

International *On Your Own Land* Competition, competing against 11,364 young artists from 26 countries.

Meanwhile, eight stu-

dents from Apollon were diploma winners at the 4th International *Planet and People: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* Contest.

Poems for children deserve overall acknowledgement

Belarusian poet Andrey Smetanin awarded Grand Prix at All-Russia Literary Festival

Mr. Smetanin has been awarded a prize at the *Crystal Spring-2012* All-Russia

Literary Festival. The event was held in late April in Orel, bringing together over a hundred poems from 30 regions of Russia, Belarus and Latvia. The jury comprised famous Russian poets, writ-

ers, critics and representatives of the Writers' Union of Russia. Mr. Smetanin's poems for children were marked with a Grand Prix and a diploma for 'Literary Art for Children'.

Online database of agro-estates

By Olga Parusova

Rather than relying on paper brochures and catalogues, owners of smartphones running OS Android can 'download' the country's first mobile application listing agro-estates, free of charge

This allows farmsteads, cottages and other rural ac-

commodation to be found quickly, with prices. Moreover, travellers can use a 'nearby' function to find the closest options. Photographs and an interactive map are included. Phones with navigator functions can even be used to locate the shortest route to any destination.

"The mobile application already includes about 200

agro-tourism sites and national parks, alongside farmsteads and cottages for holiday rental in Belarus. Naturally, their number is set to keep rising," notes one of the developers of the application, Andrey Barashko — who heads the travel portal. "We offer the unique opportunity for owners of agro-estates to attract even more customers."