

# Musical scores for ambitious conductor

Belarusian Bolshoi Theatre prepares new version of *Eugene Onegin*

Five versions of *Eugene Onegin* have so far graced the Belarusian stage, having been first performed in 1933. The classical work of Russian literature has since seen various interpretations: musically and in its staging. The last performance was created in 1986, involving leading masters of the Belarusian stage.

According to People's Artist of Belarus Alexander Anisimov, a laureate of the State Award of Belarus, who is conducting and directing the new staging, he has worked with *Eugene Onegin*'s musical score often before, each time with excitement and great joy. He recalls each performance

fondly.

"I was lucky enough to work at the Mariinsky Theatre on director Yuri Temirkanov's *Eugene Onegin*, and on Boris Pokrovsky's staging, at the Russian Bolshoi Theatre. This was a fantastic performance, created by the great director in the 1940s. Later, I staged it with Willy Decker, at the Bastille Opera; it was an interesting and successful performance. Then, I created a staging at the Barcelona Liceo Theatre, with director Peter Konwitschny. We also took the opera to Tokyo, where all the roles were sung by the Japanese in perfect Russian," he notes. Clearly, this rich expe-



Opera *Eugene Onegin* at Nesvizh Castle

rience has prepared him well for returning the opera to the Belarusian Bolshoi Theatre. "As a

musician, I'm an ambitious person. I'm truly convinced that the greatest ambitions lie in musi-

cal scores. If we can bring these to life, we honour all those involved," he emphasises.

## Marc Chagall vs Kazimir Malevich not only in creative life

Alexander Mitta to shoot film about two great painters

By Sergey Gomanov

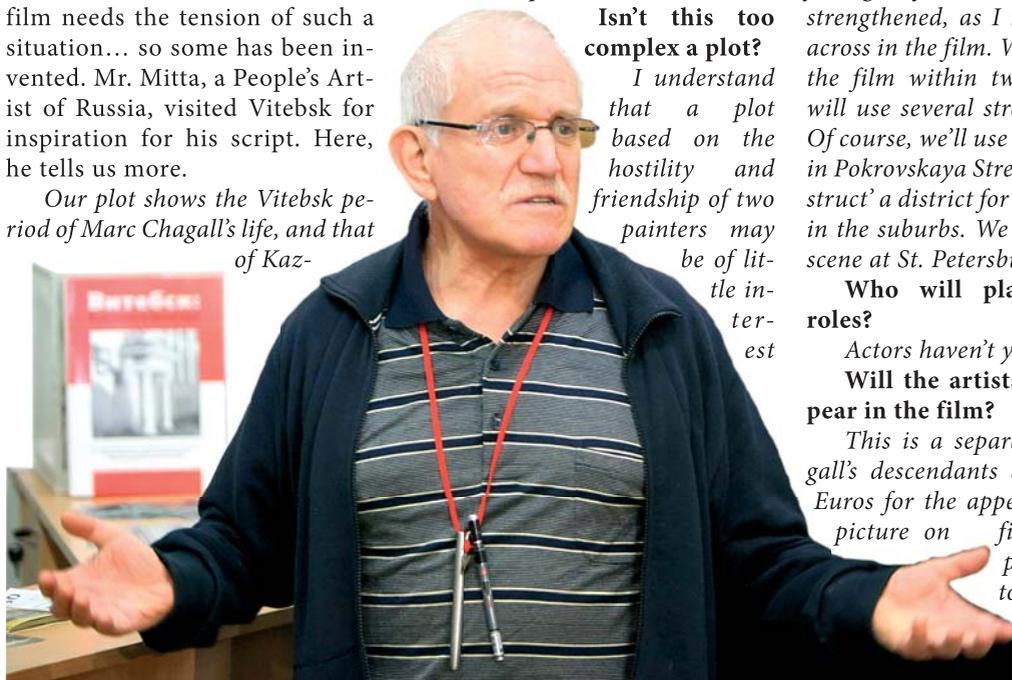
Mr. Mitta admits that he has loved Chagall since childhood and wanted to become an artist himself. Of course, Chagall's life was conflict-free, while a film needs the tension of such a situation... so some has been invented. Mr. Mitta, a People's Artist of Russia, visited Vitebsk for inspiration for his script. Here, he tells us more.

Our plot shows the Vitebsk period of Marc Chagall's life, and that of Kaz-

imir Malevich. Chagall did much for his native city in setting up a school and museum boasting the best collection of avant-garde paintings, while Malevich was a teacher and produced artworks completely different to those of Chagall. He created the theoretical basis for abstract art — suprematism. I invented a relationship for them — of friendship and hostility.

Malevich tries to take over Chagall's school by underhand means, turning it into an institute of suprematism, seeking Vitebsk as a 'centre of conversation between the Earth and space'.

**Isn't this too complex a plot?**  
I understand that a plot based on the hostility and friendship of two painters may be of little interest



Film Director Alexander Mitta

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to most, so I've added an invented 'romantic' element: someone Robespierre falls in love with Chagall's Bella. Using Lenin's 'sword and blood' ethos, he blackmails Bella into becoming his mistress by threatening to have Chagall executed for heresy.

**Did Vitebsk provide adequate sets for your film?**  
I knew that the city had been

greatly damaged during the war, so I wasn't expecting much. However, I was pleasantly surprised, as it's such a vibrant city; it's really grown on me. With time, my feelings of love and tenderness strengthened, as I hope will come across in the film. We plan to shoot the film within two months and will use several streets in Vitebsk. Of course, we'll use Chagall's house in Pokrovskaya Street but will 'construct' a district for the Jewish poor in the suburbs. We also plan a big scene at St. Petersburg station.

**Who will play the major roles?**

Actors haven't yet been chosen.

**Will the artists' pictures appear in the film?**

This is a separate story. Chagall's descendants ask over 2,500 Euros for the appearance of each picture on film but we've persuaded them to give us a 50 percent discount (or maybe more). The Chagall

Foundation, without whose permission we can't use the name of the painter, has approved the script and the title: 'Miracle of Chagall' (miracle meaning 'wonder' — from Latin).

**Will there be crowd shots involving Vitebsk residents?**

Of course. The premiere of the film will also take place in Vitebsk.

## Cultural concert festival

**12th National Festival of Belarusian Song and Poetry, hosted by Molodechno, celebrates 'double star' of Belarusian writers Yanka Kupala and Yakub Kolas**

This year the jury of young performer contest once again decided not to award the Grand Prize, although Darya Shulgina from Grodno received first prize for her singing (she was unable to attend the prize giving ceremony, as it was her graduation day).

It is vital that young talent has the chance to show its potential on local stages, before it can achieve international acclaim. Moreover,

national culture is a foundation of Belarusian unity, as emphasised by Prime Minister Mikhail Myasnikovich, reading a greeting from the President at the festival.

The city's Molodechno Arbat quarter is sure to be remembered, having been brought alive with crafts stands. Its new concert hall is also impressive, seating over 2,500 (and offering tickets online).

There can be no doubt that the event will be held again next year. Some have even compared Molodechno with San Remo, as Belarusian is considered to be among the most melodic languages, second only to Italian!

## Exotic butterflies settle in Minsk for a while

**Exotic butterflies from around the globe are going on show at an exhibition hosted by the Minsk Regional Centre of Folk Art**

Visitors to the art gallery exhibition will be able to watch the full life cycle of the butterflies — from egg to caterpillar to their metamorphosis. Meanwhile, their behaviour can be viewed in close detail — from feeding to mating. It's not unusual to find the winged beauties landing on brightly coloured clothes but there is nothing to be afraid of, since the creatures are absolutely harmless.

Some rare species are to be featured, from the impenetrable jungles of the Amazon and from remote Pacific Ocean archipelagos. Visitors are sure to learn much of interest.

Intriguingly, since ancient times,

butterflies have been associated with beauty, spring and eternity. The Greeks viewed them as symbols of the immortality of the soul while the goddess Psyche was depicted as a girl with butterfly wings. They are good omens in Southeast Asia, where seeing a butterfly in the house is a sign of good luck. Meanwhile, in India, butterflies are given by the bride and groom to each other during their wedding ceremony, as a symbol of faith and love.

The unique butterflies from the most remote corners of the world are certainly impressive. Sadly, they only live a short life, lasting from a few hours to a week. The exhibition is being constantly renewed by the butterflies mating, laying eggs from which caterpillars appear and then emerging once more from their chrysalis of transformation.