

Skilful fisherman needed to capture heart of Lady Luck at *Eurovision* contest

Alexander Rybak arrives in Minsk to promote *EuroFest* national selection round and gives advice on how to bring home victory from Baku

By Viktor Korbut

The finals of *EuroFest* — the national selection round for the *Eurovision* Song Contest — are scheduled for January 31st. People's Artiste of Belarus Alexander Tikhonovich, who heads the event, is convinced that, jointly with professionals, TV viewers will choose 'the correct artiste' to represent Belarus at *Eurovision-2012*

advise his colleagues on how to sing to capture the hearts of the audience.

On January 31st, Belarus' entrant will be announced from the final five (of over a hundred initially): Gunesh (singing *And Morning Will Come*); Alena Lanskaya (*All My Life*); Uzari (*The Winner*); Victoria Aleshko (*Dream*); and *Litesound* band (*We Are Heroes*). Interestingly, Gunesh and *Litesound* have

EuroFest participants is 'to view the contest as a holiday'. "Don't think of winning or losing, as few things in life go exactly to plan. Just prepare well for your performance, so you won't feel nervous on the huge stage. I've seen this happen before. Your artistic team should act as friends, working together for a common goal: to bring victory to Belarus," he asserts.

Alexander, whom would

and would easily conquer people's hearts in Denmark, Sweden and other European countries. I also love their show and think their English language knowledge is better than the other performers.

What about Gunesh? This is her fifth attempt at *Eurovision*...

Gunesh has the most beautiful smile in the world! Moreover, she is an Azerbaijani, who was born in Bela-

was placed first in Düsseldorf. In turn, Ms. Badalbeili wrote a song for Elnur and Samir, who represented Azerbaijan in 2008, in Belgrade.

There are strong arguments in favour of Gunesh but her rivals are also worthy. Victoria Aleshko has the strongest voice of the finalists while Uzari has self-confidence and dynamic energy. Audiences always love to see such energy from an artiste.



Rybak's trademark smile

Romania, Greece, Russia and Sweden. He's been studying the national music of each country and is attending a conservatoire, studying the violin. In 2012, he plans to continue his musical projects.

Would you like to participate in and win *Eurovision* again?

I've conquered the peak of this contest, so am unlikely to become better known than I am now. However, I might write a song for a Belarusian participant.

Mr. Rybak agrees with Mr. Tikhonovich's comment that 'an artiste who is confident in their strength should travel to Baku'. Belarus' selection for *Eurovision* includes no famous artistes; existing celebrities are taking part in the *Golden Collection of Belarusian Songs* concerts — organised countrywide and abroad, with participants performing 35 of the 20th century's hits in Belarusian. The best songs from the last century have been chosen by a jury of experts from the Culture Ministry and by *Stolichnoye TV*.

Vladimir Karachevsky, the First Deputy Culture Minister, plans to release the 2012 concert programme on CD and DVD. Meanwhile, the Deputy General Director of *Stolichnoye TV*, who is also the project's producer, proposes to launch another *Golden Collection* — comprising Belarusian songs performed in Russian (there are so many to choose from).

At *Eurovision*, Belarus will perform an English language song, as it's vital for the audience to understand the words without a translation. Artistes believe that the ability to speak a common language with listeners is the key to success.



Eurovision-2009 winner, Belarus-born Alexander Rybak, of Norway, advises *EuroFest-2012* finalists to enjoy contest performances

in Baku. He has every hope that they could return home victorious.

Recently, *Eurovision-2009* winner Alexander Rybak, who was born in Belarus, came to Minsk from Oslo. The singer represented Norway in Europe's most prestigious contest and came to

applied before and Uzari attended *Eurovision* as a backing singer for Belarusian Anastasia Vinnikova in Germany last year.

Alexander Rybak saw success at *Eurovision-2009* by charming the audience with his smile and openness. Among his first advice for the

you choose for Baku from *EuroFest*?

I'm impressed by the level of preparation of all your '*EuroFest*' participants. '*We Are Heroes*' by '*Litesound*' has a wonderful melody; I was even singing it in the bath. They have the most 'Western' tune, which sticks in the memory

rus. 'Eurovision-2012' will be hosted by Azerbaijan and her 'And Morning Will Come' is authored by Azerbaijani authors: composer Isa Melikov and poetess Zakhra Badalbeili. In 2011, Mr. Melikov produced 'Eurovision' contestant Nigar Jamal who, in a duo with Eldar Qasimov,

I love the fact that Belarusian pop singers are relaxed, yet also put on a real show, with a theme and dancers; in Norway, they tend to simply sing with a guitar.

The musician notes that he's been touring a great deal in recent years, while working on some joint projects in

Prominent writer's cultural legacy never forgotten

Yanka Kupala State Literary Museum launches 2012 by celebrating the 130th anniversary of the birth of the Belarusian classical writer, offering Autographs by the First People's Poet of Belarus catalogue

"The collection of Kupala's handwritten works gives unique

insight into the mind of the great poet, and his cultural values," the museum staff explain.

The museum boasts true rarities, such as the hand-written *Path of Life* (previously held by the Belarusian Museum in Vilnius) and the poems *Dream on the Barrow* and *Bandarouna*. His comedy *Paulinka* is on display

and the exhibition also features his early poems — written in Belarusian and Polish — alongside his personal diaries and records.

Sadly, such items are fragile, even in the controlled environment of the museum; time inevitably destroys the paper on which verse is written. However,

modern information technologies are allowing us to preserve copies for future generations; as the museum staff explain, this is the major goal of the People's Poet's book of autographs. It promotes knowledge of Belarus' cultural legacy and its influence nationally and internationally.

The presentation's organis-

ers are convinced that the rare manuscripts could encourage interest in Belarus' wonderful literary legacy; Kupala's works show him worthy of his status as a treasure of Belarusian, European and, even, global culture.

The presentation launches a series of events devoted to the famous writer's jubilee.