

Actors waiting for attention and love from the audience

Yakub Kolas National Drama theatre premieres *Wolf Song* — staged by its Artistic Head and Director Valery Anisenko

By Valentin Petrovsky

The premiere is a true debut, recreating the atmosphere of Chekhov's times — when he headed the Republican Theatre of Belarusian Drama. Mr. Anisenko has previously organised open air shows near Minsk, staging *The Seagull* and *Uncle Vanya*, which are still much spoken of. The premiere is his first work as the Theatre's Artistic Head and, accordingly, has attracted huge attention from actors and critics alike. "I can speak!" he has announced... but will he be heard?

Life is not all sweet

The troupe is yet to truly 'taste' the play, written by the Youth Variety Theatre's chief director, Vyacheslav Panin. It is no cosy armchair piece, allowing you to sit with a glass of wine and fall asleep for a while. On the contrary, it is full of challenges and thought-provoking ideas, which can be easily turned



Scene from performance *Wolf Song*

into 'Mowgli' for adults or boiling Shakespeare's drama in its complexity.

Its eternal themes include the individual's place within wider society and our sense of identity, alongside love and collective duty. While 'popular theatre' draws crowds and creates revenue, it's important to also nurture serious plays. Pinter's absurd cross-word puzzles and Beckett's misanthropy may be difficult to follow, but

we cannot live on a diet of love stories. Original, experimental, innovative approaches and bitter-sweet works must surely be encouraged or we may die from an overdose of sugar! Sometimes, a spark is required to ignite our souls: a spark only struck from sweat and perseverance — never from the comfort of routine.

How can an actor portray an animal? We can only advise the troupe to

watch the opening of Mr. Abdrashitov's *The Servant*, in which Oleg Borisov growls at a wolf. Here, we feel the aggression in his eyes and old teeth, which frightens the wolf into retreating into the forest — like a vulnerable kitten failing to lap milk.

Tension runs high

Vitebsk's audience braved the rain to attend the premiere, brandishing umbrellas rather than flowers. The city on the

Dvina River has always nurtured culture, like a gardener coaxing flowers into bloom. On October 21st, it hosted the French *Baby's Laxative* (from Minsk's TEART International Festival). I watched one man peruse the unusual poster, perhaps wondering if it might be suitable for a family outing. He looked more as if he'd prefer Yevgeny Petrosyan's comedy but perhaps he was experiencing a true theatrical hunger. Vitebsk's audience is known for its appetite for in-

novation — as any Moscovite playwright might dream of; Serebrennikov and Shirvindt would be delighted. Sadly, the regional centre lacks its own drama festival to attract such theatrical giants.

Glubokoe... and beyond

While fastening his bow-tie, Mr. Anisenko is as anxious as a boy before his premiere. "I believe that the Vitebsk Region needs a revival and I'm ready to help. We'll take the performance to Glubokoe, Postavy, Polotsk, Novopolotsk and Ushachi; the Vitebsk Region is larger than Belgium so why are we sleepy? Why don't we have a theatrical movement? Is it laziness and apathy? Simply, let's get going! I think that actors have fallen out of the habit of receiving love and attention. As Director, when I presented an LCD TV set to one of my actresses many were utterly surprised. However, we are not living in the Stone Age! I've reopened the café, which serves tasty sandwiches, and have ensured that all the lights are working. We've also gotten rid of old furniture. I'm now thinking of organising an open air show at Repin's mansion in Zdravnevo," he tells me.

"You're certainly busy," I note, and he replies, "How else should I be? I urge actors to show their professionalism by fighting! The time has come to rival Minsk, ridding the Kolas Theatre of its eternal second place.

Artistic heritage of master to be presented in home country

Marc Chagall's works from Israel Museum coming to Minsk

By Victor Mikhailovsky

The *Marc Chagall: Life and Love* exhibition, displaying works from the collection of the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, is being hosted by the National Art Museum in November. It is the 125th anniversary of the birth of the artist this year — widely celebrated worldwide.

The unique collection of 89 works by the famous master is being presented for the first time to residents of the Belarusian capital, with many having only ever been seen at the Israel Museum and at temporary exhibitions abroad. In particular, three famous paintings are to be exhibited: *The Praying Jew*, *The Synagogue in Sadeh*, and *The Lovers*. His drawings and prints from 1910 through to the 1960s are to be on show: landscapes, portraits, still life works, genre compositions and book illustrations.



The Praying Jew by Marc Chagall

Marc Chagall: Life and Love is being organised by the Israel Museum at the initiative (and with financial support from) the Ministry of Culture of Belarus. The Be-

larusian Embassy to Israel and the Israeli Embassy to Belarus have given their help, with funding contributed by the British American Tobacco Trading Company.

Belarusians first saw Marc Chagall's original works at the National Art Museum in 1997, when his granddaughters Bella and Meret Meyer celebrated the anniversary of his birth by arranging an exhibition in Belarus. It was entitled *Marc Chagall. Works from the Mediterranean Period. Gouaches, Watercolours, Lithographs (1949-1985)*. The Museum has also hosted other such exhibitions: *Marc Chagall. Dedication to Paris*; *Marc Chagall. Landscapes*; *Marc Chagall and the Scene*; and *Marc Chagall. In Black and White*. Belarusian fans of his unique style have received rare opportunities to view the multifaceted artistic legacy of their famous compatriot.



After Minsk, Astana hosts exhibition of artistic holograms

Time for Astana to be surprised

Kazakh capital hosts Holography-2012. Astana exhibition of artistic holograms, prepared by Belarusian specialists

Following its success in Minsk in Oct-Dec 2011, the holographic exhibition has moved to Astana. Organised by Belarusian Magiya Sveta (light magic) and Holography Industry enterprise, it was a great success in the Belarusian capital, displaying over 150 works from 20 countries. It was attended by over 100,000 people.

The Astana exhibition is showcasing even more exhibits: over 170. Housed at the spacious Palace of

Schoolchildren Sports and Education Complex, it allows the organisers to fully reveal their imagination.

Around two thirds of the works were created in Belarus, with some having been seen in Minsk: 'The Cross of Yevfrosiniya Polotskaya'; 'Treasures of Belarusian Land'; 'Typing Machine'; and 'Egg in the Nest'. Moreover, holograms from Russia, Ukraine, the UK, France, Canada and elsewhere are widely represented.

Like the exhibition in Minsk, that in Astana has been collected under the guidance of famous Belarusian scientist Leonid Tanin — the founder of artistic and protective holography in our country.