

Full house at Belarusian State Circus

Group of *Galkynysh* horsemen from Turkmenistan present unique programme

Heavenly horses canter around ring

Turkmen speech rings out at Belarusian State Circus

By Viktor Korbut

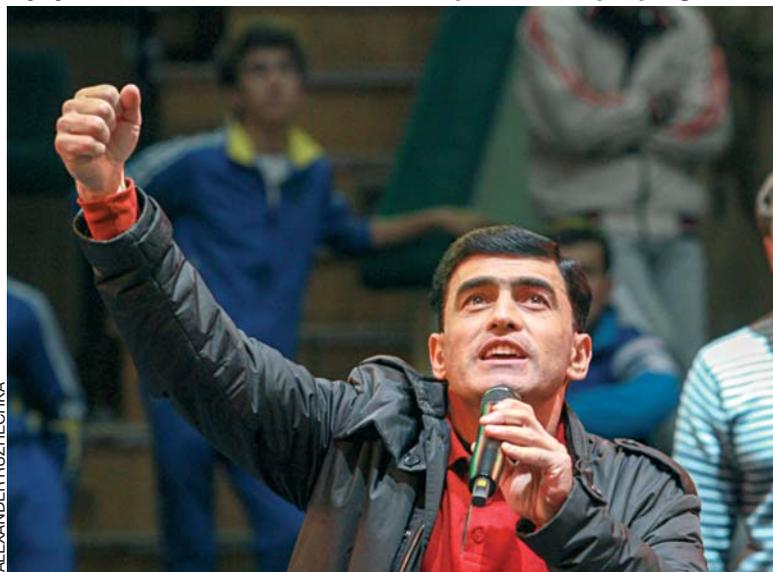
Galkynysh (Revival) acrobatic horse troupe have brought true Akhal-Teke horses to Belarus: the pride of Turkmenistan — as depicted on the country's coat of arms. Akhal-Tekes are called heavenly horses, being thought the most spiritual, as well as the cleverest and most passion-

ate. Their delicate and graceful movements seem almost mythical, thrilling audiences with their silky beauty.

The Turkmen *dzhigits* performed wonderful acrobatics on their horses, led by Pygy Bairamurdyyev, an Honoured Figure of Culture of Turkmenistan. His love of his horses is in his blood, making his work with the troupe a joy

to behold. He tells us, "Horses are special animals for the Turkmen and Akhal-Teke are our true pride. They are known for their elegant bearing, as well as their fluid, beautiful movements."

Dunia Babaeva, an acrobat with *Galkynysh*, tells me about one trick which required six months of practise, "We build a pyramid with our bodies, which is a seri-



ALEXANDER RUZHECHKA

Pygy Bairamurdyyev doesn't conceal emotions

ous test of strength; I have to hold two girls with my hands." The circus programme currently includes Belarusian riders also, in addition to trained bears and trapeze artistes.

Pupils become colleagues

German artist and volunteer Matthias Jurke teaches Belarusian children to draw in an unusual manner

By Inna Yurchikova

The sun, houses, ships and animals are common themes for children's paintings — as seen at the international artistic charity exhibition: *Children Welcome Children*. However, their style is rather unusual, being influenced by German artist Matthias Jurke. His work worldwide with orphans and disabled children has helped them explore their talents, painting wood with acrylic paints.

"Every child is an artist but not all love to paint with water colours or felt pens. My technique convinces them that their artwork is beautiful. I pass on my skills, making them my fellow artists. The Belarusian exhibition features works by children from Germany, Poland, Ukraine, Norway and Romania — which allow their creators to say 'hello' to Belarusian children, while inviting them to send greetings in return," explains Mr. Jurke.

The master classes attracted 45 children from family-type orphanages in Minsk, Bobruisk, Klichev and the Osipovichi



Volunteer Matthias Jurke

District alongside pupils from Minsk's school for children with poor hearing #1. Volunteers brought everything necessary: boards, frames, brushes and paints. Raisa Shamak, from Osipovichi, cares for seven children at her family-type orphanage, and has raised 22 so far. She's delighted to see children being given the chance to work with a true artist. With determination and zeal, their interest could transform into a future profession.

Mr. Jurke sees himself not merely as a painter but as a philosopher, creating allegorical stories. His *Garden Woman* is devoted to environmental

problems, showing that we are responsible for our climate and wildlife. His female character grows a flower from a seed of hope, symbolising faith in our ability to care for our world. His style is 'naïvely childlike' in its simplicity, while also seeming full of ancient wisdom. The idea is simple: the globe is full of problems but children's faith can inspire us to act. He admits that he continues to learn from children and has been extremely impressed by his joint work with the Ruban family, from Bobruisk. Next year, the artist is to invite the seven children from this orphanage to attend his master classes in his native city

of Michendorf, in Germany.

"Participation in our organisation's contests and projects won't turn all children into future professional artists or singers but they'll certainly learn skills useful in later life," asserts the Head of the Belarusian Children's Fund, Alexander Trukhan. "This project also helps establish contacts between children from different countries — via art."

The Fund helped organise the trip while Natalia Marchenko of the Belarusian Union of Artists helped set up the exhibition. "We've known Matthias for over 18 years. He has a friendly and interesting family, with five children — all of whom are very artistic. They write poetry, play music and participate in charity projects. His house is always full of guests, with some turning up mysteriously to receive shelter," Natalia smiles.

The artist, with his colleagues and assistants Iness and Lidia, plans to next visit Moldova and, probably, Lebanon, gathering more children's drawings for a future international show.

History at its foundations

By Valentina Kaverina

Brest Hero Fortress Memorial to become heart of cultural and tourist centre on both sides of Zapadny Bug

The international cultural centre is to cost about \$1bn, with most invested by Russian businessman Vladimir Mikulik, who was born in Brest. European, Russian and Belarusian experts, who gathered for a seminar run by the Brest City Executive Committee, were initially cautious but, over three days of work, unanimously agreed that the preservation of our historical heritage can be combined with profitable activity and, even, become a tool for city development.

Brest Fortress is sited within a 300 hectare site, with the memorial complex occupying some part. The Chairman of the Brest City Executive Committee, Alexander Palyshenkov, is satisfied that, by the time of the millennium anni-

versary of Brest, the site of ancient Berestie will have been restored. He notes, "The boundary is secure. Our development strategy will be based on history but won't be limited by it. The Fortress will not contain electricity or modern materials but will have a commercial basis."

The exact site for the cultural centre is yet to be announced or designed but copies of medieval Berestie buildings are planned, including a cafe, hotel, shops, museums and galleries.

Four working groups were formed at the seminar, to make inventories of cultural initiatives for Brest and its surroundings, over coming months. Market research is to be conducted and they'll plan how best to connect the city with the Fortress. By April 2013, proposals will be ready for public presentation and discussion, so that specifications can be agreed. All Brest residents wishing to offer ideas will be able to take part.