

# Bird of happiness flying towards Baku on St. Valentine's Day



Belarus' representative for *Eurovision-2012* song contest to be decided on February 14th

By Viktor Andreev

The finals of the national selective round for the International *Eurovision-2012* Song Contest — *EuroFest* — are to take place on February 14th, with a live TV broadcast from Minsk's Palace of Sports starting at 6pm. Viewers will be able to tune to Belarus 1 and Belarus 2 TV channels, seeing finalists perform in the following order, by draw: Alena Lanskaya, Gunesh, Victoria Aleshko, *Litesound* and Uzari.

The Palace of Sports' stage will be decorated in the spirit of Maurice Maeterlinck's *Blue Bird*; each contestant has the chance to catch the bird of happiness by its tail. 3D technologies will be used during the show and the winner will be chosen on points earned from the professional jury and TV viewers.

"*Eurovision* favourites from past years will come to support our contestants and congratulate the audience on St. Valentine's Day — which coincides with the *EuroFest* finals. Among them will be Marija Šerifović, Ruslana, Sakis Rouvas and the heads of the European Broadcasting Union," notes Svetlana Smolonskaya-Krasovskaya, who heads the Press Service of the show's organiser: Belarusian TV and Radio Company.

It's already known that the Belarusian participant will perform in Baku in the second semi-finals, on May 24th. "This is the result of a draw hosted by the capital of Azerbaijan," comments *EuroFest* producer Dmitry Baranov. "43 countries are to take part in the 57th International



Finalists of national *EuroFest* contest widely supported by jury and audience

*Eurovision* Song Contest, in Azerbaijan. Its second semi-finals will begin with a song from Serbia while Bosnia and Herzegovina will close the event. Sweden, Georgia, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Macedonia, Estonia, Turkey, Malta, Slovakia, Croatia, Norway, Ukraine, Armenia, Lithuania and Bulgaria will also perform and vote in the second semi-finals. Meanwhile, France, Germany,

Spain, the UK and this year's contest organiser — Azerbaijan — are automatically through to the finals — to be held on May 26th."

The two semi-finals and the finals will be hosted by Baku Crystal Hall — a sports complex whose stage has been approved by the European Broadcasting Union, being able to seat over 23,000.

The *EuroFest* finalists are

busy preparing their shows in Minsk. Some have even changed songs. Alexander Tikhonovich, the Head and Chairman of the jury, explains, "In line with the rules, it's allowed to change a song before the finals. The winner will be chosen by the audience and a professional jury. Of course, whatever choice they make, singers and composers have the chance to show their talent to the whole

country."

The judges will be assessing the strongest voice and stage charisma. Oleg Minakov, who once led the popular *Roublezone* band, has lived in Belgium for 15 years and loves *Eurovision*. He tells us, "A *Eurovision* song should reflect existing trends and the current mood, or create them. Victoria Aleshko's performance is a typical song but inappropriate for *Eurovi-*

*sion*. Meanwhile, *Litesound* has a good song and boasts good pronunciation, so it has commercial potential. Uzari's choice follows modern musical trends. If *Eurovision* was choosing a title song for a James Bond film, he'd definitely win. Gunesh also has a strong song but it's not perfect for *Eurovision*. Alena Lanskaya's song is 'standard' for the contest but, in recent years, Malta has been coming to *Eurovision* with similar compositions and, sadly, is yet to win."

Alena Lanskaya is viewed as a favourite but asserts that everyone has their own strengths. She stresses, "They all have their own advantages so it's difficult to say who'll win the finals; 'All My Life' is almost ready — we're just working on the final arrangement and costumes."

Victoria Aleshko has no plans to change the concept or idea of her show but is changing her set and her backing singers are to perform some acrobatics on stage.

Having listened to experts' views, Gunesh has chosen her song: 'And Morning Will Come' — composed by Azerbaijani Isa Melikov and Zakhra Badalbeili (Isa produced Nigar who — jointly with Eldar — won *Eurovision-2011* in Germany).

Uzari (Yuri Navrotsky) has independently composed his 'Winner' and has complete confidence in the song. His show at the *EuroFest* finals will be the most thrilling. In his free time, Uzari perfects his vocal singing, studying with one of the best Russian teachers — Olga Safronova.

## Pain of poet's soul

By Oksana Fedosenko

**Yanka Kupala: *Circles of Paradise* historical drama premiered at Belarusian Drama Theatre**

Svetlana Naumenko's project is dedicated to the 130th anniversary of the birth of the People's Poet of Belarus, known for his unusual and lyrical poems on the theme of love and passion. He bore witness to truth and lies, mercy and cruelty, sincerity and cynicism. The play explores his journey of self-knowledge and others' reactions to his work during the uneasy years from 1917 to 1942.

The play is a full scale historical drama, with music, grotesque elements and allegory. The cast of 14 includes Honoured Artist of Belarus Igor Sigov, Denis Parshin, Alexander Marchenko and Veronika Buslayeva.

Svetlana Naumenko, the author and director of the play, is well known to the Belarusian Drama Theatre's audience. She has been directing plays for children and adults which have been a huge success. She made her debut as a playwright and producer with *Golden Heart* and *Cinderella* at the Belarusian Children's Theatre and now stages performances in Belarus and Russia.

## Synthesis of art and high fashion showcased to public

By Oksana Atroshchenko

**Larissa Noury Shakinko's two new paintings on show in Paris**

*Light Symphony* and *Galactic Clouds*, by Ms. Noury Shakinko, are on show alongside a unique painted silk evening dress — designed by French couturier Jean Marie Pujol. The game of colours brings a new dynamism to the classical form of this elegant and exclusive gown. Certainly, the synthesis of art and high fashion has caught the public's

eye and that of the French media. Interestingly, Ms. Noury Shakinko modelled for the dress herself.

In fact, Ms. Noury Shakinko has long been liaising with the French designer, painting his silk dresses. Sometimes, he is inspired to create a design after seeing her fabric paintings (which, in turn, draw inspiration from her pictures) while, at other times, the silhouette of the garment comes first. Silk painting is enjoying a popular trend at present.

The Paris exhibition marked the

60th anniversary of the French Trade Union of Artists, gathering nearly 40 painters and sculptors from various cities, with works chosen by contest.

The Mayor of the 8th Arrondissement of the French capital, Francois Lebel, was welcomed to the event, in addition to the Deputy Director of the Sorbonne Institute of Urban Design and Planning, Jean-Antoine Duprat. Members of the Professional Union of Artists, the Culture Ministry and collectors also attended.