

# Flight to Baku on wings of crystal bird

Who will represent Belarus at *Eurovision-2012* International Song Contest?

By Viktor Andreev

Singer Alena Lanskaya is to represent Belarus at the *Eurovision-2012* International Song Contest in Baku, as became known after the *EuroFest* final national selection round. Her performance of *All My Life* won the crystal Swarovski bird (a symbolic prize). Meanwhile, the TV audience vote and that of the professional jury were divided, with many giving preference to *Litesound* band. *Eurovision-2009* winner Alexander Rybak, a Belarus-born Norwegian citizen, was quite determined in announcing, "Yes, I liked Alena Lanskaya very much. She really performed well. However, I also enjoyed the performance of *Litesound* band. After listening for just ten seconds I immediately felt that it was a wonderful song." It remains an open issue as to how Belarus will be represented at the contest in Baku, with a possible combination of Ms. Lanskaya singing with *Litesound*.

## Star shower at Sports Palace

Five finalists competed at Minsk's Sports Palace for the right to represent Belarus at the prestigious musical forum in Baku: Victoria Aleshko, Alena Lanskaya, Gunesh, Uzari and *Litesound* band.

*Eurovision* winners from previous years also performed: Ruslana of Ukraine (the winner in 2004), Marija Serifovic (Serbia, 2007), Belarus-born Norwegian Alexander Rybak (2009) and Ell & Nikki duo (Azerbaijan, 2011), as well as incomparable Greek Sakis Rouvas and the Swiss

2012 entry — *Sinplus* band.

Lys Assia, who won *Eurovision* in 1956, performed as the highlight of the event.

## Crème de la crème

*Litesound* band, which is well known abroad, was one of the favourites to win *EuroFest*, having taken first place at the Festival Internazionale di Maiori in Italy in 2006. In 2007, their *Solo Per Te* song, recorded jointly with Italian star Jacopo Massa, was broadcast on the radio in Belarus and Italy, topping hit parades in Italy for twenty weeks. *Litesound's* songs have twice won *Belarus' Song of the Year* and, in 2010, their *Solo Per Te* video was named among the top ten in the CIS and Baltic States — according to the Mir Interstate Television and Radio Company.

In 2011, their *See You in Vegas* video won the National Music Award 'Clip of the Year', so it was no surprise to see the band receive the loudest applause at *EuroFest*. Alena Lanskaya even admitted that they are her favourite band, "I believe that each of the five finalists is worthy of going to *Eurovision*."

Ms. Lanskaya has already claimed several victories at international contests: in Bulgaria, the USA, Russia and Ukraine, as well as at the *Slavonic Bazaar in Vitebsk* Arts Festival in 2011. She has

practised vocal with Valery Daineko — a great star of the Belarusian musical stage from Soviet times, who used to work with *Pesnyary's* Vladimir Mulyavin; he is still a leading musician with the *Belarusian Pesnyary* band, which remains popular in Russia and neighbouring states. She has begun well and has support from professionals.



Alena Lanskaya sings

Alena is progressing confidently through her career, as is evident. She tells us, "I've been fond of singing since childhood, even joining a musical school without telling my parents. They were against the idea, as they thought I should focus on a more serious sphere. In fact, I studied economics on graduating from the Belarusian-Russian

University in finance, credit and taxation speciality and even worked at Belarusbank as a head cashier. However, I always achieve my goals and I simply knew what I wanted from life, even as a child. From five years of age, I would perform in public, singing with choirs; my teachers noted my talent and I later sang at discos and with a folk band.

Some artistes are ashamed to admit that they once sang in restaurants but I understood it was a job. I may look fragile but I have a very strong character; I always achieve my goals."

## Views for 2013

Ms. Lanskaya is now preparing for *Eurovision*, being ready to change her image or song if necessary. She notes, "If I come across a stronger song, with a good dance routine, I may use it." She isn't certain of winning of course, as she well remembers the unlucky experience of her predecessors. She tells us cautiously, "I'll do everything I can to finish with a high place."

Ms. Lanskaya is at the start of a long journey to conquer the hearts of fans across Europe; a tour is planned but her success depends on many factors, including a certain element of luck. Of importance is the person chosen to help her prepare her performance



Litesound band performs

in Baku. Russian pop-king Philip Kirkorov, who has arrived in Minsk, may take her under his wing. The pair were spotted having dinner at an Italian restaurant in Minsk immediately after *EuroFest*, already discussing their possible 'tandem'. Mr. Kirkorov has compared Ms. Lanskaya with Ukrainian star Ani Lorak, and previous Belarusian entrant Anzhelika Agurbash.

However, Kirkorov is looking even further into the future. It's known that, in 2007, he helped Belarusian Dmitry Koldun reach 6th place and has offered his help again to the young singer for *Eurovision-2013*. "I 100 percent believe that Belarus will win *Eurovision* in 2013. I have no doubt. I have a song for Dima Koldun, which he hasn't yet heard. However, he's promised to think over my proposal," notes Mr. Kirkorov.

Surely, it can only be a matter of time before Belarus

claims victory at *Eurovision*: if not in 2012, then in 2013. Ukrainian singer Ruslana, who won *Eurovision-2004*, agrees. She has great hopes for Alena Lanskaya, saying, "She has such a very soft and beautiful voice. It's clear that she sings from her soul. I noticed Alena back at the *Slavonic Bazaar in Vitebsk*, where she won the Grand Prix. I'd love to hear her sing more in Belarusian though; the more elements of native language included, the quicker the country will achieve success at *Eurovision*." Ruslana's own winning song was performed in Ukrainian and English.

Alena still has time to consider her decision. A well-known Western musician has already, supposedly, offered collaboration. Of course, the first step towards the *Eurovision* finals involves the Belarusian representative passing the second semi-final round, to be held on May 24th.

## Symphony and philosophy meet at concert

By Irina Vesnina

### 20th century Belarusian academic music performed at Zaslavl-2012 Festival of Arts

As is traditional, the festival launches the artistic year of the National Academic Concert Orchestra of Belarus (headed by maestro Mikhail Finberg). *Zaslavl-2012* is the 140th event for the orchestra, which is celebrating its 25th birthday this year.

The Zaslavl Festival always focuses on prominent

domestic composers. This time, a concert was devoted to the 100th birthday of outstanding Belarusian composer Lev Abeliovich (1912-1985), whose artistry unites the folk legacy of Belarus with the traditions of Western and Russian musical schools. The *Samples of 20th Century Belarusian Symphonic Music* concert featured bright, sensitive works by the composer, who was often called a philosopher. "Abeliovich's music — like that of other Belarusian composers from

the last century — brings together a contemporary feel and the best traditions of domestic musical culture," notes Professor and Doctor of Art Studies Olga Dodiomova — a permanent member and host of the Festival.

Speaking of the composer's place in the musical traditions of Belarus, Mr. Finberg (who knew him personally), tells us, "Lev Abeliovich was a modest man. If he had attended this festival, he would have been greatly touched by such attention shown to his

music and to his personality."

The orchestra promotes Belarusian academic and pop music throughout the Republic. "Its obligation is to bring the joy of true music not only to Minsk but to the residents of small towns. For many years, they have been travelling countrywide; the annual holiday is Zaslavl is an example for other regions," Mr. Finberg stressed, speaking at a press conference dedicated to the festival, which was being held in the city for the 12th time.

## Imagination in native land

By Larisa Shiganova

### Brest Regional Public-Cultural Centre launches exhibition of young artists — All Together

The exhibition includes 125 works by twenty artists from the Brest Region; among them are paintings, graphic works, metal sculptures, batik and fabric dolls.

"We traditionally organise exhibitions by young artists. The present show unites

authors aged under 35," noted the Centre's Director, Mikhail Konkov. "Among them are well known artists — such as Anna Chepurnaya-Oleinik, Tatiana Potvorova, Oleg Oleinik and Maria Redko — and those exhibiting for the first time."

The Chairman of the Belarusian Union of Artists' regional branch, Nikolay Gushchenkov, believes the works express each artist's individual modern world view.