

Always full houses at home and on tour

Belarus' National Academic Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre gives over 50 performances in Austria and Germany



Artistes from Bolshoi Theatre always inspire with their performances — including that of Giacomo Puccini's *Turandot* opera

The ballet troupe launched an unprecedentedly long tour on December 15th, in Austrian Vienna, with *Swan Lake*. Over 45 days of touring abroad, the Belarusian artistes have performed *Swan Lake* and *The Nutcracker* 51 times.

In Vienna, Bayreuth, Cologne,

Stuttgart, Frankfurt, Hanover, Munich, Hamburg, Mannheim, Berlin, Bremen, Kassel and other German cities, audiences highly praised the Belarusian ballet stars: People's Artiste of Belarus Igor Artamonov, honoured artistes of Belarus Olga Gaiko,

Lyudmila Kudryavtseva and Konstantin Kuznetsov, as well as international competition laureate Yekaterina Oleinik, and leading ballet dancers Oleg Yeromkin, Irina Yeromkina, Denis Klimuk, and Igor Onoshko — among others.

The Bolshoi Theatre troupe's

tour through Austria and Germany has been a triumph. Meanwhile, Belarusian audiences have been enjoying ballet performances in Minsk. For the first time in the theatre's history, ballet shows have been performed on its stage at full scale.

Archaeologists help arrange exhibition

11th-13th century items by Gomel craftsmen on show

The *Ancient Gomel — City of Craftsmen* exhibition has launched at the local Rumyantsev-Paskevich Palace, featuring original articles made by 11th-13th century craftsmen (discovered during archaeological excavations in the historical part of the city) — including artefacts from an ancient Gomel gunsmith's shop. Visitors can see modern reconstructions of household items, costumes, plate armour, and cold steel arms for the first time — all provided by Gomel's Mstislav Glebovich's Bodyguards Club of Historical Reconstruction and Fencing.

Gomel (Gomij in written sources) is one of the oldest cities in Belarus. It was first mentioned in the Ipatiev Chronicles in 1142 and is thought to have been an urban centre of the Radimichy tribe in the late 10th-early 11th century. By the early 13th century, the city had become a prominent political, commercial, cultural and trade centre of the north-western part of Chernigov land, with a population of over 5,000 inhabitants and a total area of 40 hectares.

More museums needed

First National Museum Festival to be organised in Grodno this year



Maxim Bogdanovich Museum in Grodno

By Svetlana Savkova

Belarus' Culture Minister, Pavel Latushko, has noted at a session of the Culture Ministry that 154 state museums are currently operational. At the instruction of the President, a Museum of Contemporary Belarusian Nationhood is being created, as well as exhibitions at the Nation-

al History Museum and Nesvizh Palace and Park Estate. Moreover, following instructions from the Head of State, a Museum District is to appear in the Belarusian capital, housed along Kirov, Lenin and Karl Marx streets, as guided by the 2012-2017 State Investment Programme.

The Culture Ministry aims to firstly improve the management

and marketing of its museums, using the latest IT and opening shops selling souvenirs and advertising goods. The second promising area of expansion involves international co-operation. Mr. Latushko notes that, in 2011, only a few Belarusian exhibition projects were presented abroad, including one by Brest Fortress in London and another by the Museum of Theatrical and Musical Culture History, in Warsaw. The Modern Fine Arts Museum has done well in this field, despite having a limited collection; it annually organises exhibitions from its own funds.

Mr. Latushko underlines we must update our approach towards the creation of new museums in Belarus. "We should consider carefully where to locate each museum, so that they can accent particular aspects of local history and traditions," he asserts. Moreover, experience shows that we need to introduce contemporary elements into exhibitions. Accordingly, the Culture Ministry plans to organise a multi-level workshop dedicated to creating exhibitions, inviting specialists from Russia.

Rich history remembered

By Tatiana Pastukhova

Republican Organising Committee approves plan of celebrations for Polotsk's 1150th anniversary

The plan of events includes international conferences, including Orthodox conferences involving representatives from the three 'cities of St. Sophia' (Novgorod, Kiev and Polotsk), a festival of Orthodox creativity and bell ring and an international opera art festival near the walls of ancient Sophia, as well as exhibitions of photography and fairs of decorative-and-applied arts and crafts. Additionally, a Town of Craftsmen will be set up.

The Education Ministry, jointly with the Belarusian Republican Youth Union, has prepared a cycle of educational youth events dedicated to the history of Polotsk and its culture, which are to be held in schools and other educational establishments. The Union of Writers of Belarus has elaborated a separate festive programme.

UNESCO has registered Polotsk's 1150th birthday on the 2012-2012 Memorable Date List and, in October 2012, an exhibition will be held at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. Preparations have already begun, including photos of the city's past and present. Moreover, an international conference on the *History and Archaeology of Polotsk and Polotsk Land* is to be held in the city, with financial assistance from UNESCO.

Polotsk, which is known as the 'mother of all Belarusian cities', was Belarus' first capital, built along the great 'from the Varangians to the Greeks' route, where the Polota River meets the Zapadnaya Dvina.

Belarus' nationhood and culture originated in Polotsk and the city gave birth to world enlighteners Yevfrosiniya Polotskaya, Frantsisk Skorina and Simeon Polotsky. It is mentioned in the *Tale of Bygone Years* in 862, and became the centre of Polotsk Principality, which was ruled by an independent dynasty. It was one of the most ancient Eastern Slavonic principalities, existing for over three centuries.

Actors speak of great love

By Yelena Markelova

Grodno Drama Theatre stages musical dedicated to Day for All Lovers

The genre is described as a musical 'montpensier', featuring songs by famous French chansonniers: Salvatore Adamo, Gilbert Bécaud, Philippe Lafontaine, Catherine Lorient, Jacques Goldman, Gérard Lenorman and Isabelle Geffroy. The atmosphere of Parisian Montmartre is recreated — once home to artists, poets, painters and musicians.

We learn about views on love in French language, with French born artist taking a lead role, supported by famous Grodno actors and ballet artistes.