

Beautiful melodies of first spring day

By Inna Svetlova

The Big Hall of the Belarusian State Philharmonic recently hosted a performance of rare Wagner pieces

On the Friday evening of the first day of spring, musicians from the State Academic Symphony Orchestra and the Symphony Orchestra of the Belarusian State Academy of Music took the floor, conducted by People's Artist of Belarus Alexander Anisimov — their artistic director and chief conductor.

Young musicians played in the first half, being joined by professors in the second, notes Mr. Anisimov. "I wanted to hear the music performed by young hearts, burning with love for their profession, and experienced specialists; their 'fusion' produced a unique energy."

It was the Philharmonic's first performance of *Wotan's Farewell*, from the opera *Valkyrie*, singing with Vladimir Baikov, of Germany's Wagner Society. Meanwhile, Russian Irina Krikunova sang the final scenes from *Tristan and Isolde* and *Twilight of the Gods*.

Wagner is less popular across the Slavic states than he is in Romanic countries but few can deny the power of his works, which are always performed by orchestras with pride. "We could not overlook the 200th anniversary of the birth of the German composer, with whom I have a special relationship," notes the President of the Wagner Society of Ireland, maestro Alexander Anisimov. "I'm one of a handful of conductors from the former Soviet Union who can boast having conducted the entire *Ring of the Nibelung* cycle of four operas."



Crazy Day or The Marriage of Figaro takes permanent place in repertoire of Gomel Drama Theatre

Classics never grows old

Gomel Regional Drama Theatre to premiere *Threepenny Opera* musical

By Tatiana Bogomolova

The Threepenny Opera is perhaps the most well-known work by Bertolt Brecht, which he wrote at the age of 30, with Kurt Weill. It premiered with great success in Germany in 1928 and has since been performed regularly by major theatres worldwide.

Talented director Sergey Pavlyuk gives a modern interpretation of this play on Gomel's stage, portraying the heartbreaking tale of love and greed, faith and betrayal, honour and wickedness. Set among London's lowest society of crooks and beggars, pimps and prostitutes, thieves and corrupt policemen, Brecht's characters are at once

repulsive and compelling and, of course, utterly believable. The main protagonist is Mack the Knife, who is three times betrayed by his 'friends' in return for financial gain. *The Threepenny Opera* mocks conventions, forcing the audience to become sharply critical.

Svetlana Arkhipova's sets and Yuri Buss' choreography suit the

play perfectly, which runs until mid-summer.

Gomel's Regional Drama Theatre is to present three premieres, while the Nizhny Novgorod Gorky Academic Drama Theatre (named after Gorky) and theatres from Kursk, Ryazan and Brest will be presenting their own plays on its stage.

Past under ancient castle

What does the future hold for the restored Puslovsky Palace and what greetings from the past are to be discovered in its vaults?

Those restoring Kossovo Castle (Puslovsky Palace) recently discovered a wonderfully preserved centuries-old copper pot, a china fragment of a plate (inscribed 'Columbia'), fragments of forged railings and a collection of 19th-early 20th century bottles in various sizes. The finds near the town of Kossovo are certainly intriguing. We visited the Ivatseviichi District to explore the cellars of the famous palace and

penetrate deep into its history.

"We've been working here for half a year already," explains Brestrestavratsiya JSC foreman Anatoly Maximchik, who is leading the restoration works. "It's an interesting job, as we discover more artefacts each time we go down deeper into the cellars, which host the drainage system, laid in the time of Poland's rule. Not long ago, we found the remains of a tile but we're yet

bottle fragments."

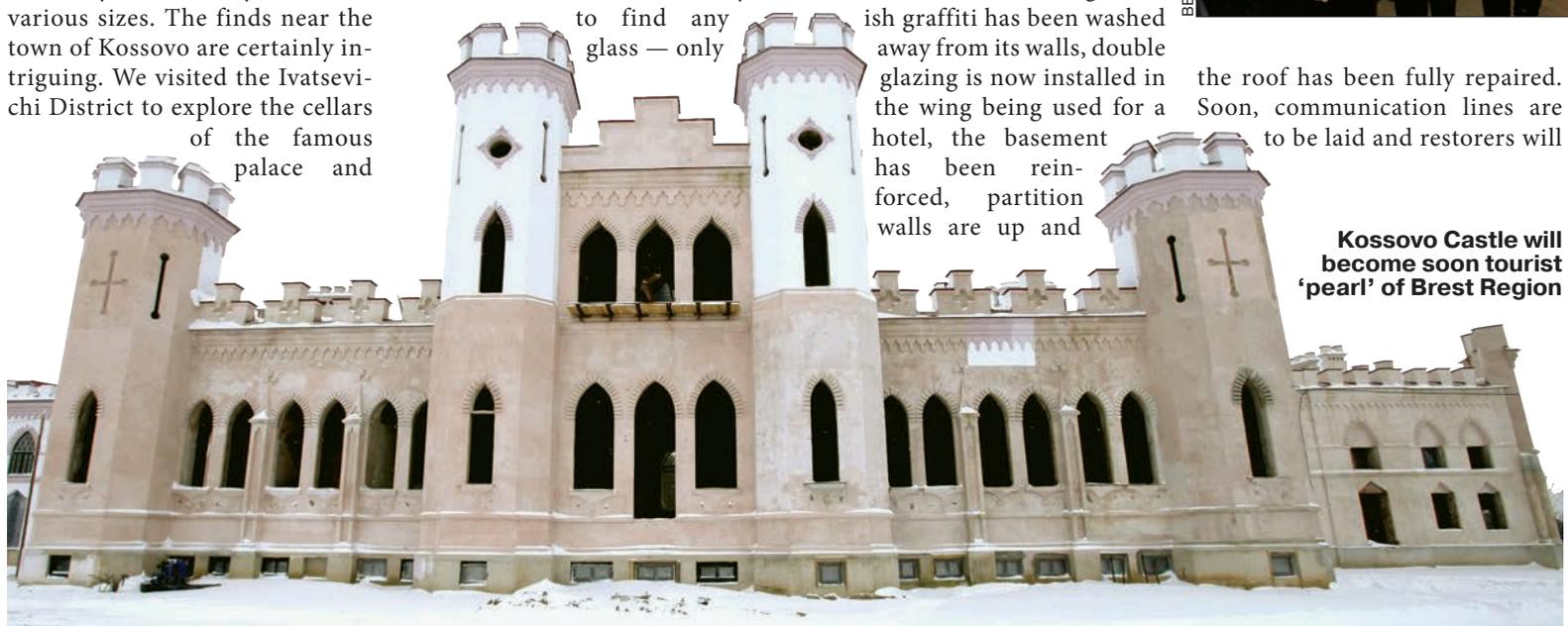
In fact, the floor of the palace hall was made of glass, allowing viewing of an exotic fish pool beneath: quite unique for the 19th century. The restoration works are a major project, especially as the palace had 132 different rooms. Having visited the site, I can vouch for the progress made already. The building was in very poor condition previously but the ruins are transforming: foolish graffiti has been washed away from its walls, double glazing is now installed in the wing being used for a hotel, the basement has been reinforced, partition walls are up and



the roof has been fully repaired. Soon, communication lines are to be laid and restorers will

begin on interior decoration. The final stage envisages restoring the East and West towers and the grounds.

There's no doubt that the Castle will become a major tourist attraction, with its rich history and undeniable beauty. Local people recall that the sun lit one of its rooms for a full two and a half days each year and that tapping on the window sill of the East wing's second floor could be heard over the whole building — such were the acoustics. Pots were built into the castle's East wall (one of the recent fragments is likely to be from this source) and these may have caused the effect.



Kossovo Castle will become soon tourist 'pearl' of Brest Region