

One festival's spring motifs

Mogilev hosts 7th International *M@rt.Contact* Youth Theatrical Forum

By Marina Semekhova

Mogilev's Regional Drama Theatre's recent street festival has seen mime artists performing, as the Regional Executive Committee's Deputy Chairman, Valery Malashko, noted at the launch of the *M@rt.Contact* event. He explained, "This year, as the new cultural capital of Belarus and the CIS — a first for us — we're hosting the Youth Theatrical Festival; it was one of the planned events which helped our city on the Dnieper River win this honour."

Naturally, the event aroused much interest, with tickets to shows sold out in just three days. The Head of the Regional Executive Committee's Cultural Department, Anatoly Sinkovets, noted "We're already receiving proposals to extend the event, to cover district centres, and are planning more meetings between young people and the actors and directors they admire. We'll definitely take all wishes into consideration!"

This year, the forum gathered troupes from eight countries: Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Armenia, Lithuania, Latvia and Moldova. Fourteen performances were staged across seven days, hosted by the Regional Drama Theatre, the Puppet Theatre and Mogilev Concert Hall. "Certain traditions have been formed since *M@rt.Contact* began but it's good to break these and introduce something



Arlekin Vilnius Theatre presents Gogol's *The Nose* at Mogilev Theatrical Forum

new," admits the Mogilev Regional Drama Theatre's Director, Andrey Novikov. "However, we'll certainly continue following our key concept of aiming the festival at young people."

This season has been characterised by open air performances and street drama, explains Mr. Novikov. "Our desire to attract as many people as possible, helping them to enjoy the breathtaking atmosphere of the event, has inspired this experiment. We've invited Polish Biuro Podróży to perform by the Town Hall.

For the past two decades, the troupe has been touring worldwide, participating in numerous festivals. These artistes are 'expensive' but they are dazzling and perform regardless of the weather. Their *Carmen's Burial* was full of light and fire, featuring stilt acrobats. We fenced a space around the Town Hall with special handrails and entry was free to everyone."

Puppet theatres took part for the first time this year; including Yerevan's O. Tumanyan State Theatre, the Mogilev Regional Puppet

Theatre and the Belarusian State Puppet Theatre. "Puppet theatres are sometimes stronger than traditional drama troupes and are staging an increasing number of shows for adults," Mr. Novikov emphasises. "The Mogilev Regional Puppet Theatre is a good example, having recently staged its version of William Shakespeare's famous tragedy *Hamlet*."

The organisers of the festival acted wisely in moving away from tradition, in allowing puppet performances to take part. In fact,

the Grand Prix went to the Mogilev Regional Puppet Theatre's experimental interpretation of *Hamlet*: hailed as a true gift for World Theatre Day. The original performance defied stereotypes that our theatre is predictable.

After the second day of the forum, guests from Russia, Ukraine, Latvia, Lithuania, Armenia, Moldova and Poland were voicing their approval of puppetry, claiming that some of the performances were more powerful than traditional drama presentations. Another puppet theatre — from Yerevan

— was awarded 'For Original Scriptwriting'; its enchanting *Flight over the City* was full of lyricism, telling the story of a young blind girl, played by the director of the performance, Narine Grigoryan.

However, traditional drama theatres didn't disappoint, with the prize for best direction being awarded to Galina Zhdanova — for her contemporary staging of *Romeo and Juliet*. Her performance, with the Theatre na Liteynom, also won the St. Petersburg *Proryv* (Breakthrough) Youth Theatre Prize in its native city. Meanwhile, a resident of northern Palmira, from the Comedian's Refuge Drama Theatre, Yekaterina Zorina, was named best young actress at the forum for her role in *Warsaw Melody*: a famous lyrical drama by Leonid Zorin. Yekaterina played female student Helena — a Polish singer and would-be celebrity. Actor Anatoly Barannik, with Brest's Academic Drama Theatre, took the title 'Best Young Actor' for playing Holden Caulfield in *The Catcher in the Rye*.

The 'Bright Debut' prize went to Yekaterina Yergulevich, of the Mogilev Regional Drama Theatre, for her portrayal of Empress Yekaterina I in *Jester Balakirev, or The Court Comedy*. Finally, Chernigov's Regional Academic Music and Drama Theatre (named after Shevchenko) was awarded 'For Preservation of Repertoire Traditions'.

Vivid impressions of life

By Andrey Gusin

Chisinau hosts personal exhibition of Gomel Region native Vyacheslav Ignatenko — a graduate of the Belarusian State Academy of Arts and Deputy Head of the Belarusian Commune of Moldova

The Earth and Sky exhibition at the National Museum of Ethnography and Natural History of Moldova is showing landscapes inspired by the beauty of Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus. At the launch, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to Moldova, H.E. Mr. Vyacheslav Osipenko, congratulated Mr. Ignatenko on the opening of another personal exhibition. The Ambassador emphasised that Mr. Ignatenko's creativity has always been closely connected with Belarus and is



A work by Vyacheslav Ignatenko

well known in his motherland and abroad, as he has enjoyed about 20 personal exhibitions in Chisinau, Tiraspol, Odessa and Minsk.

According to the Ambassador, Mr. Ignatenko's paintings affirm that art transcends borders and nationality. Although born in

Belarus, he has been living in Moldova for many years, promoting the spiritual closeness of our two countries through his creativity. He studied in Minsk but has been living and working in Moldova since 1983 and is a member of the Union of Artists of Moldova.

Ovations reward mastership

Young Belarusian pianist Olga Stezhkom performs at Corto Hall in Paris

Ms. Stezhkom played pieces by Brahms, Debussy and Prokofiev at the Animata

French Association concert in support of young talented musicians. Ms. Stezhko is a laureate of the Arthur Rubinstein International Pianists Contest and took first prize at

the Halina Czerny-Stefańska International Pianists Contest. Georgian Tamar Beraia also participated in the concert, at which the audience gave resounding ovations.

Ironical implication of plots

By Lyudmila Veselovskaya

Exhibition at Information Ministry displays caricatures and humorous photos

"We've been organising this exhibition for three years now," explains the Editor-in-Chief of satirical magazine *Vozhyk* (Hedgehog), Yulia Zaretskaya. "It's impossible to live without humour, so it's always interesting to look at such works. Each artist boasts their own style and particular technique. No two caricatures are the same."

Skilfully drawn in pencil, Belarusian caricatures are unique in subject, created in

just a few strokes. One depicts a cheeky seller offering sausages without meat while another portrays grandparents trying to pull back their granddaughter from the clutches of the Internet.

Sergey Volkov, a member of the Belarusian Union of Artists and an Honoured Figure of Arts of the BSSR, tells us, "You need to be born a caricaturist as it's not an easy art to learn. You may be a perfect graphic artist but be unable to create humorous drawings."

Such moments can be captured by pencil, as well as the camera lens. "Some shots fail to fit any particular genre yet are

unarguably interesting," notes Anatoly Kleshchuk, a photo correspondent with *Zvyazda* (Star) newspaper. "I've made a special folio of such photos, gathered over the years. Some found a place in the newspaper but I never imagined they'd be exhibited elsewhere."

The impact of caricature and humorous photos cannot be overestimated; foreign editions regularly publish them and, a few years ago, a caricature department opened at the Academy of Arts in Moscow. The exhibition at the Information Ministry draws attention to Belarusian caricature, showing works by domestic masters.