

Inspire works honestly and worthily wins Grand Prix

2nd International Inter-University Modern Dance contest *Take a Step Forward!*

By Marina Svetlakova

Vitebsk recently hosted a festival for students from Belarus, Russia and Ukraine, with the programme featuring jazz modern and street dance. The usual performances were supplemented by a high intensity 'Dance-Off' — where each team had one minute to impress. The National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine won the Grand Prix, while Kiev's Polina Ivanyuk was named best female dancer.

The event was organised by the head of the Belarusian Republican Youth Union at the Vitebsk State Academy of Veterinary Medicine, Artem Ignatenko. He tells us, "Our first contest was held at the Vitebsk Philharmonic, with tickets quickly sold out. This year, the level of participants was higher. The Veterinary Academy's own dance group, *Inspire*, also impressed the judges."

Vitebsk choreographer Diana Yurchenko, who helped judge the contest, praised *Inspire* for their high energy dancing but laments that they didn't quite fit with the format of the festival. She notes, "Their jazz modern technique was great, so they deserved their Grand Prix."

Déjà Vu, from Luki State Academy of Agriculture, admitted that they felt at home in Vitebsk. In 2011, they came to support their contestant in the *Miss CIS Agricultural University*. At last year's festival, they received a prize 'For Artistic Expression'. Sadly, this time, they weren't among the winners.

Russia's Karandash (Pencil) Dance Theatre from the Moscow State Academy of Veterinary Medicine and Biotechnology (named after K.I. Scriabin) took third place while Konstantin Pavlikov of *Hopper Team* (hip-hop) from Orel State Agrarian University was named best male dancer.



International Modern Dance Festival gathers participants from Belarus, Russia and Ukraine

Gifts from northern capital

By Lyudmila Minakova

Minsk hosts Days of St. Petersburg Culture

Belarusian listeners have been enjoying works by Tchaikovsky, Shostakovich, Bizet, Paganini and other famous composers, performed by the State Academic Russian Folk Orchestra (named after V. V. Andreev), which is known for its combination of 'tail-coats and balalaika'.

Meanwhile, the National Art Museum delighted visitors with its unique collection of glass, enamel and ceramics, on loan from the Yelagin Palace Museum of Russian 18th-20th Century Decorative and Applied Arts. In addition, the House-Museum of the First RSDRP Congress opened its doors for an historical exhibition entitled *V.I. Lenin-Ulyanov: Comrades-in-Arm and Opponents*, organised by the Raznochinnny Petersburg Memorial Museum.

Finally, the Maxim Gorky National Academic Drama Theatre hosted St. Petersburg's Akimov State Academic Comedy Theatre, which performed Branislav Nušić's *Doctor of Philosophy* (their calling card).

Document and symbol of cultural importance

Historical rarity of Statute of Grand Duchy of Lithuania on show at exhibition in Minsk

By Natalia Zlotnik

The Great Statute of the Grand Duchy exhibition, dedicated to the 425th anniversary of the establishment of the Statute of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (adopted in 1588), has opened at the National Library of Belarus, in Minsk. According to the Director of the National Library, Roman Motulsky, who took part in the opening ceremony, the exhibition is vital to the cultural life of Belarus. "In every epoch, we view events subjectively. By collating historical documents, we can make a more objective assessment," he asserts.

The exhibition showcases various editions of the Statute of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania: from the collections of the National Library and the Mogilev History Museum; and reprinted editions of the Statute and other legislative collections from the 16th-19th century. The main exhibit is the Statute of 1588 in Old Belarusian,



Statute of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in focus

which was printed in Vilno, in 1594-1595. It is the only original copy in Belarus, on loan from the Mogilev History Museum, having been bought in June 2012, from a private collector in Moscow, for \$45,000. The Museum of Mogilev launched a fund raising campaign to purchase the book relic, which was being auctioned online by a Moscow an-

tique shop. Generous donations led to the edition being bought on June 7th last year and it then moved to Mogilev for permanent residence. There are only about 30 copies of the edition worldwide — kept in Russia, Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine and the UK.

The Statute of 1588 was compiled by such prominent statesmen as Chan-

cellor Astafy Volovich and Court Chancellor Lev Sapoga, and was published by Piotr Mstislavets, at a Vilno publishing house, funded by the Mogilev Mamionichi merchant family. The original Statute represents the highest achievement of ancient Belarusian legal thought, having influenced the cultural, historical and legal traditions of European states. The Statute is not just a document; it is a monument of utmost cultural importance.

The Great Statute of the Grand Duchy exhibition is part of the 9th international bibliological readings festival: *The Statute of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the History of Belarusian Culture*.

Attending a recent conference were scientists from Belarus, Russia, Lithuania, Latvia, Ukraine and Poland, sharing their expertise on the history and culture of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and their knowledge of books and collections, and discussing how best to preserve and promote book heritage.

Peter I, Mikhail Kutuzov and others

By Olga Toguleva

Outstanding Russian political figures to 'settle' at National History Museum for two months

The Historical Mosaics exhibition — organised jointly with the State History Museum of St. Petersburg (at St. Peter and Paul's Fortress) — has opened in Minsk. Like London's famous Madame Tussauds, it displays wax figures of Russia's foremost figures: from Peter I to President Vladimir Putin. The Soviet epoch is represented by figures of Vladimir Lenin, Josef Stalin, Nikita Khrushchev and Leonid Brezhnev.

The exhibits include replicas of military commanders Alexander Suvorov, Mikhail Kutuzov and Georgy Zhukov. By some quirk of fate, most are connected with Belarus in some way.

Of course, the wax figures reflect external similarities with their originals but also capture facial expressions, gestures and typical poses. Costumes and small details are reconstructed with historical accuracy, and each 'set' features items from the National History Museum: documents, photos, maps, posters, furniture and artworks.