

# World open to theatre

Yanka Kupala Theatre answers positively the question if theatre can generate profit

By Tatiana Orlovskaya

Today's theatres are leaning ever more towards 'commercially popular' performances, often featuring music, since these are most in public demand. Young actors are encouraged to be able to sing and dance, as well as appearing in TV commercials or working as TV hosts, making their faces more well-known. Some even host clubs or create pop or rock bands.

The long-term argument is that commercial popularity may not sit well with the serious nature of true acting. Of course, we are all free to make independent choices but actors are also dependent on the desires of others, since they must receive approval. Moreover, their entire vocation is centred on 'becoming another' through an acting role. Perhaps it's no surprise that the younger generation is keen to supplement income through advertising contracts and 'easy' TV work. However, in a desire to please the public in a less formal environment, such as a nightclub, actors may find themselves with less independence than



A scene from *The Office* play — new premiere of the Yanka Kupala National Theatre

ever. You may have played Macbeth, Hamlet or Uncle Vanya but it won't stop a tipsy patron from shouting out unseemly requests. The ultimate act may involve bit-

ing your tongue and smiling through the pain!

Pleasingly, the Yanka Kupala Theatre has only benefitted from its recent tour and its embracing of

the comedic musical genre, as evident in its latest premiere: *Local Cabaret*. It's a prime example of how theatre can be 'crowd pleasing' (and thus profitable)

while also showcasing true talent. Its concert format is perfect for touring, adapting to any stage. It would even suit a corporate party, since its 16 numbers are

easily reduced. Poetic Victor Shalkevich, fantastic soloist Pavel Kharlanchuk and Jewish comedy duo Victor Manaev and Sergey Zhuravl could produce a show on their own.

The word 'cabaret' comes from the French word 'pub', featuring poets and virtuoso musicians to entertain in drinking venues; over time, 'cabaret' became linked to restaurants, which gave variety shows and even organised concert contests. The Kupala Theatre's version oozes bittersweet irony, making no claims to grandeur. Its talented actors are free to improvise and the audience is welcome to sing along to *Polka*, *Meetings in a Café* or *Gypsy Romance*.

The professionalism of the Kupala Theatre's actors enables them to present vaudeville, operetta, rock opera or light-hearted musicals. They can compete with any domestic musical theatre, accompanied by their excellent orchestra. They can sing with a microphone or without. Some people may not like their latest offering but you can't argue with ticket sales. *Local Cabaret* is already sold out.

## Shoes wins over audience

Short film by director Konstantin Fam receives highest award at 8th International Imperia Video Festival in Italy

*Shoes* is a co-production by Belarus, Russia, Poland, the USA, the Czech Republic and France, honouring the memory of Holocaust victims. It tells the story of a pair of shoes, from their display in a shop window to their end in a mass grave at Auschwitz. The unique direction shows only the legs of characters through the film, with a soundtrack of music. It joins the Yad Vashem Memorial (Israel) collection, alongside outstanding films about the Holocaust by Spielberg, Polanski and Benigni.

The International Imperia Video Festival is an important celebration of inde-



Household items are embodiment of the film

pendent film making, hosted by the Liguria Region. It is one of the most important festivals in Italy, held under the patronage of UNESCO and among the 13 most important festivals in the world, supporting cultural heritage and education.

A total of 721 works

from 52 countries applied to take part in the International Imperia Video Festival in 2013, with Belarus presenting five films. A work by the Belarusian Video Centre — a documentary short called *Warmth*, directed by Victor Aslyuk, was selected for the main competition.

## Author's beautiful style

Minsk hosts *Fashion Mill* finals

Over 110 collections were demonstrated during the final stage of the festival-contest. Best of these were determined by international experts, as well as fashion and design specialists from the UK, France, Italy, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia and

Ukraine.

The guests of the *Fashion Mill* finals were proposed to visit the opening of the exhibition in the 'Photo' nomination and a demonstration of finalists' collections in the 'Fashion School' and 'Fashion Master' nominations. Of course, there was also the awards ceremony of winners

and prize holders, alongside a gala presentation. The demonstration of guest collections was also interesting — the *Strong Beginning* charity project featuring the pupils of Minsk's regional boarding school for children with impaired hearing, and *Design-March* project involving famous Belarusian athletes.

## Three Saturdays at Town Hall

Early summer will see Svobody Square hosting Jazz Saturdays at Town Hall for the first time, welcoming well-known musicians from 10 countries

In the heart of Minsk, jazz artists from France, the USA, Japan, Lithuania, Russia, Britain, Ukraine, Poland and Germany will join leading Belarusian groups such as *Apple Tea*, *The Lipnitsky Show Orchestra* and

Konstantin Goryachy's trio.

"In 2012, thousands of people enjoyed the *Marc Chagall* exhibition at Yakub Kolas Square; now they'll hear first-class jazz in Svobody Square, for our second street art project," notes the Director of the Idea Fund, Dmitry Gmyza.

Concerts are to be held on three consecutive Saturdays (June 8th, 15th and 29th), with musicians performing in front of the Up-



Minsk Town Hall

per Town Concert Hall. It is estimated that almost 3,000 spectators will attend each show.

## Whatever happens in life will turn out to be for the better in the end

Ello international channel takes for airtime a clip in Belarusian language — *Aura* band's *Do you Hear Me* song

Ello is a Russian channel of the world's famous video hosting Youtube. It boasts over one million subscribers and more than one billion reviews being a leader among Russian and CIS musical channels. Moreover, it's also ranked among top-50 world musical channels.

The video for the song was shot in Dubai. Because of shooting *Aura* band couldn't take part in *Eurovision-2013* selection round. "At first, I was slightly upset that the dates of our trip to Dubai and listening for the contest coincided, as we were preparing this song for the selection round and thought to surprise everyone and shoot a video in advance. However, now, when our work yields fruit

I see that whatever happens will turn out to be for the better in the end. I'd like to wish luck to our entrant in Malmö," notes soloist Yulia Bykova.

*Aura* band has been working in pop-rock style since 2005. Over eight creative years the group has written over 300 songs for artists in Belarus, Russia and Moldova while also taking part in various festivals and contests.