

# Word of honour from Stanislaw Moniuszko

Premiere of *Verbum Nobile* opera conquers hearts of Minskers and city guests

By Yury Chernyakovich

In early June, the Gallery Chamber Musical Theatre hosted the Belarusian premiere of Stanislaw Moniuszko's *Verbum Nobile* lyrical comedy. It first premiered worldwide in 1861 in Poland (during the lifetime of the outstanding Belarusian-Polish composer).

The Minsk premiere was met with enthusiasm and much ovation and applause. The musicians sat on stage instead of in the orchestra pit, creating a medieval mood and tying the show to the spirit of past centuries. The intricate and comedic plot, bright characters and appealing melodies easily charm audiences, placing this among Moniuszko's most popular plays. Since its first showing, it has been staged several times in Poland and Russia.

The opera explores the eternal theme of love, focusing on the age-old custom (among the Belarusian and Polish gentry) of arranging their children's marriage by 'verbum nobile' (word of honour). Young Polish Stan-

islav finds shelter at merchant Lagoda's house, after an accident, and is cared for by the host's daughter, Zosya. The two fall in love but marriage is impossible, as Zosya is already promised to another. Of course, we anticipate obstacles to love being removed, to ensure a happy outcome, and are not disappointed.

The Head of the Gallery Chamber Musical Theatre and founder of the Classics Musical House, Alexander Chakhovsky, directed *Verbum Nobile*, explaining, "Moniuszko always sought to bring his operas to Minsk — even when he lived in Poland. However, *Verbum Nobile* was never staged in our country, for certain reasons. We decided to make amends, allowing true lovers of music to enjoy the show."

The opera is next to travel to Grodno, being performed on Belarus' oldest theatrical stage: the Grodno Regional Puppet Theatre — opened by patron Anthony Tizengauz over two centuries ago. In late June, Grodno residents will be able to admire Moniuszko's *Verbum Nobile*.



*Verbum Nobile* opera arouses huge interest among audiences

## Music with bell ringing

### 15 countries to take part in 20th Mighty God International Festival

The International Festival of Church Music — *Mighty God* — is being hosted by Mogilev, from June 24th-28th, gathering around 1,000 participants. From the Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant confessions, guests will enjoy a diverse programme of concerts and other cultural events.

The celebration launches on June 24th with a presentation of an album entitled *Godly Music Sounds: 20 Years of the Mighty God Church Music Festival*. On the same day, there will be a book exhibition devoted to religious themes, involving Mogilev libraries. The Moscow Virtuosos State Chamber Orchestra and Presidential Fund Talented Youth scholarship holders will be giving a concert, joined by young musicians supported by the Vladimir Spivakov Special Fund. Shows will take place over a four-day period, enabling Mogilev residents and guest to enjoy compositions performed by Americans, Ukrainians, Moldovans, Lithuanians and Italians.

The programme includes the 8th international scientific conference, entitled *Mogilev's History: Past and Present Family Traditions at the Heart of Spiritual-Moral Upbringing*. In addition, there will be a bell ringing event and concerts by the Mogilev City Capella Symphony Orchestra and Chamber Choir, conducted by Venezuelan Herardo Estrada. The Moscow State Academic Chamber Choir, conducted by Vladimir Minin, is also sure to delight the audience, alongside Tajikistan's Peo-

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opens doors to many other festivals of church music — both in Belarus and abroad. However, *Mighty God* is perhaps the leader among these, truly promoting mutual understanding and co-operation between the Christian confessions. The first



Organ music performed at festival

ple's Artiste Oyat Sabzalieva, a Concertina ensemble from Moldova, and various organists and choirs.

The *Mighty God: 20 years* gala-concert, at the Ice Palace, will close the festival, as will a concert by *Mirra* — a group of Belarusian and Israeli performers — on Stars' Square. It's expected that representatives of 31 nationalities will take part: the same number of states have taken part over the entire 20 years of the festival. The international forum

festival took place in July, 1993 — held at the initiative of Vladislav Blin, a prior of the Mogilev Roman Catholic Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (now a bishop of Vitebsk). The festival took its name from the first line of Natalia Arsenieva's *Mighty God* song (with music composed by Belarusian Nikolay Rovensky). The prayer is a true spiritual hymn for Belarusian Christians — being performed at many events.

## 'Valuable' recognition

By Katerina Peregud

### Sculptor Ivan Misko, painter Gavriil Vashchenko and People's Choir (named after Tsitovich) nominated for Union State Award for Literature and Art for 2013-2014

Recently, the nominees for one of the most prestigious and 'valuable' cultural awards (worth around \$200,000) were announced: People's Artiste of Belarus Ivan Misko, for his sculptures; People's Artiste of Belarus Gavriil Vashchenko, for his Cour-

age series; the National Academic People's Choir of Belarus (named after Tsitovich), led by People's Artiste Mikhail Drinevsky; and eight others from Russia. Nominees include those responsible for a radio performance, a TV series, musical compositions, works of literature and a collection of unique shawls. All the projects are to be submitted for public discussion and will be widely presented at the 22nd International Slavianski Bazaar in Vitebsk Arts Festival. The final decision will be made in November.

## Who gains crown?

### Belarusian representative for Miss Supranational-2013 International Beauty Pageant announced in mid-May

Over 200 beauties have fought for the right to perform at the prestigious event. The first stage of selection interviewed the girls, exploring English proficiency, hobbies and creative abilities. Those eligible for the second stage took part in a swimsuit catwalk and the final round was a photo shoot. The jury will announce the *Miss Supranational* entrant after viewing videos and photos.

The jury comprises famous faces from the Belarusian fashion world: Lolita Uguryan-Tumilovich and Alexander Kirinyuk, the Art

Director of the National School of Beauty — Yelena Troitskaya, modelling agency director Tamara Goncharova, and the director of Sergey Nagorny's Fashion Studio — Olga Popova.

*Miss Supranational* is among the top three international beauty contests. This year's show is organised by ONT TV Channel together with an international team of professional choreographers, stage directors and deportment teachers. More than eighty beauties from around the world will come to Belarus to fight for the crown and the show will be broadcast in 120 countries.

The finals of the competition will take place in Minsk in September.