



35th International Classical Music Festival — January Music Nights — in Brest brings together many stars

Warm winter melodies resound

International Classical Music Festival *January Music Nights* celebrates its 25th anniversary

By Valentina Kozlovskaya

It's impossible to imagine the Christmas holidays without music in Brest. Its Academic Drama Theatre has been entertaining us for the past 25 years and, on January 8th, the 15th *January Music Nights* classical concerts began.

The wonderful event is organised by Honoured Artist of Belarus Lilia Batyreva who, this year, gathered musicians from 25 countries: over 700 in all, including about 70 soloists. For the first time, those from the United States, Jamaica, Denmark and Sweden took part.

Stars included Russian tenor Vladislav Piavko, pian-

ist Boris Blokh, violinists Liana Isakadze and Zakhar Bron, first flute with Italian opera houses Antonio Amenduni and bass singer Ali Askerov — a soloist with the Azerbaijan State Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre, who was invited to sing at mass in 2002 by Pope John Paul II. In addition, a trio of Italian tenors took part, including Roberto Costi — the last and most beloved pupil of Luciano Pavarotti. Two concerts were led by People's Artist of Russia Svyatoslav Belza.

Also performing was violinist Yulia Igonina — one of the most prominent Russian musicians of her young generation, known for playing a violin made by Italian Vincenzo

Panormo (1700), provided by the Russian State Collection of Unique Musical Instruments.

Talented students from Moldova, Poland, Belarus and Lithuania then performed, followed

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The opening evening of the festival was in the hands of young musicians, with the overture played by soloists and ensembles of Brest Music College (named after G. Shirma).

by soloists and musicians from the National Academic People's Orchestra of Belarus (named after I. Zhinovich).

The Orchestra was participating in the festival for the

first time, giving its hour-long concert, led by its artistic director and chief conductor, People's Artist of Belarus Professor Mikhail Kozinets. The latter has been on the stage of *January Music Nights* more than 15 times, so received not only a certificate for taking part but a special guest souvenir.

President Lukashenko sent greetings to all participants and guests, saying, "I'm sure that the current jubilee festival will give fans a memorable celebration of classical music, enriching the spiritual wealth of our country and further strengthening friendship between peoples."

After the official ceremony, there was a musical 'tsunami'

in the form of a 50-minute performance of Giovanni Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*. Soloists of the Perm Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre (named after P.I. Tchaikovsky) Nadezhda Babintseva and Irina Krikunova sang psalms, accompanied by the State Symphony Orchestra, under chief conductor Alexander Anisimov, joined by the children's choir of Minsk musical school #10. The festival continued with a parade of young talent and masters whose ability to delight was unstoppable.

January has brought Brest's music lovers another gift: the reopening of the Brest Region Philharmonic after reconstruction.

Age old symbols give way to new

By Vera Gromova

Belarusfilm Cinema Studio films to be released in digital format

According to Belarusfilm's Director General, Oleg Silvanovich, in 2012, the national film studio completely shifted to digital technologies, bidding farewell to celluloid film: a symbol of the film studio and all cinematography for many years.

Last year, Belarusfilm Studio acquired two Arri Alexa digital film cameras (now standard among professionals), and modernised Red One cameras and the Baselight multi-format digital itscolour grading system. From 2013, all films produced and released by Belarusfilm will appear in digital format, including on Blu-Ray disc.



Belarusfilm Cinema Studio shoots film *Kinder-Vileika Ghost*

"The shift to digital format, with its higher resolution, adds lots of excessive details to film images which need to be mixed. Moreover, film scripts have to be adjusted if they are meant for cinema release," explains Mr. Silvanovich. Speaking of films released on DVD, he notes that it's impossible to stop them becoming available for free download online, which presents 'financial difficulties'.

At present, Belarusfilm enjoys a full cycle of production, releasing up

to 15 fiction films, 40 chronicle documentaries and 10 animated films annually, of any complexity. In 2012, it completed work on over 24 documentaries and 9 animated films. Its fiction films included *Hunting the Gauleiter* (directed by Oleg Bazilov), *In the Fog* (Sergey Loznitsa), *Dance of Death* (Igor Chetverikov), *The Role* (Konstantin Lopushansky) *Oh, ma-mochki!* (Ivan Pavlov), *Stealing Belmondo* (Nikolay Knyazev) and *Smersh* (Alexander Daruga and Eduard Palmov).

Estonian *Nutcracker* to be performed on Belarusian stage

Estonian National Opera coming to Belarusian Bolshoi Theatre in February

Four ballet and opera performances are being given as part of the tour, opening with *Manon Lescaut*, by Giacomo Puccini, staged by Latvian director Andrejs Žagars. The performance was premiered by the Estonian National Opera last season, using a libretto based on the Abbe Prevost novel *L'Histoire du Chevalier Des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut*. Mr. Žagars has drastically changed the chronology and geography of events, to place a new spin on Puccini's well-loved work.

Belarusian fans of opera will also enjoy the Estonians' staging of *La Traviata*, by Giuseppe Verdi. Based on *La Dame aux Camélias*, a play adapted from a novel by Alexandre Dumas, it is one of the world's most popular operas,

rivalled only by Georges Bizet's *Carmen*. Every major theatre has staged Verdi's masterpiece, with the lead role of Violetta probably the most coveted among sopranos past and present.

Manon is choreographed by Kenneth MacMillan, providing a colourful illustration of 18th century life. In fact, the Estonian National Opera is only the sixteenth theatre in the world honoured with rights to stage the ballet.

The Estonians' *Nutcracker*, based on Hofmann's fairy tale, is certainly a delight, being easy and unpretentious. Tchaikovsky's wonderful music is the perfect accompaniment to the festive season.

The Estonian National Opera is Estonia's major music theatre, founded in the second half of the 19th century. Its current repertoire features opera, ballet, operetta and musical comedy.