

Visiting Sofia Golshanskaya

Medieval Culture Festival, in Golshany, gains international recognition

By Lyudmila Minakova

The traditional Golshany Castle Festival — in the Oshmyany District — gathered more people than ever before this year. Its authentic music, knights' tournaments, theatrical shows, folk crafts and medieval atmosphere are part of a Latvia-Lithuania-Belarus trans-border co-operation project. Established within the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Programme, the project brought together around 80 folk singers, poets, dancers and craftspeople from Lithuania.

For the past five centuries, the lands and people of Belarus and Lithuania have shared a common history — evident in their books, museum artefacts, culture and ancient castles; these evince the former glory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Vilnius District resident Ada Germanavichene tells us, "I've been studying vytinanka (paper cutting) for almost twenty years, participating in Lithuanian festivals and fairs. However, this is my first trip to a Belarusian event. I'm delighted and impressed by everything I see: I had no idea that the culture and history of our Baltic and Slavonic nations shared so many commonalities. Vytinanka is present in both our cultures, although differing slightly, as you'd expect. Belarusians create



At festival in Golshany, spectators impressed by knightly duels

larger scale works, while we make them more colourful. The festival has a friendly atmosphere and it's wonderful to see parents bringing their children of all ages."

The festival certainly offered plenty of amusement, including having your photo taken with Sofia

Golshanskaya and other historical characters, by the castle walls. You could take part in an unusual theatrical performance (featuring *Lity Taler*, *Altanka*, *Yavaryna* and other musical bands), learn medieval dancing, watch knights on horseback, sample Belarusian spice cakes

and buy unique hand-made Belarusian-style souvenirs. Visitors could even read the latest editions of poetry and a book about the Historical Route of Oshmyany Hill (published jointly with the Lithuanians).

Cooper Alexander Strankovsky, from Molodechno, took his bar-

rels, wine sets, beer jars and other handcrafted items to the festival; his kumgan was truly unique. "The latter is found only in museums. I read about it in an ancient book and made my own, in oak. My barrels for honey are made from lime, while I use ash for pickled mushroom barrels. Juniper is for sauna buckets," he explains, adding, "Actually, such articles are enjoying increasing demand — especially among those wishing to remain healthy and eat natural products."

Some visitors travelled huge distances to attend the fair — even from remote Siberia: Mikhail Gaidukevich and his wife covered 6,000km by car to visit his sister, Tatiana Pauk, in Smorgon. They are delighted to learn more about Belarusian culture, as Tatiana explains, "We're showing them our best Belarusian cultural sights, having already visited the Mount of Glory and the sacred spring in the village of Losk (Volozhin District). Several days ago, we read of the Golshany Festival and decided to come here as well."

Mikhail adds, "Nothing of the kind is organised in Russia's Irkutsk District, where I live. We've loved seeing the beautifully dressed knights, horses, kings and queens and having our photos taken with them. It's fascinating here so I have no regrets about driving 6,000km!"

New season of *State Frontier*

Belarusfilm completes shooting *State Frontier*. The Eleventh Film: Last Spy

The latest season's action takes place in the early 1990s, against the background of the USSR's collapse. Border guard Anton Pekarsky is played by Andrey Frolov, known for *Three Railway Stations*, *Deadly Dance*, *Two Destinies*, *Russian Translation*, *Stronger than Fire* and *Mine in a Fairway*.

Director-producer Igor Chetverikov has brought to life the script, co-written with Valentin Zaluzhny and Iliya

Tsofin. In the lead roles are Belarusian and Russian actors Pavel Kharlanchuk-Yuzhakov, Igor Denisov, Yelena Kozyreva, Rafael Mukae, Mikhail Meskhi and Tomas Zhaibus. The leading role of Anton Pekarsky is played by Andrey Frolov, known for *Three Railway Stations*, *Deadly Dance*, *Two Destinies*, *Russian Translation*, *Stronger than Fire* and *Mine in a Fairway*.

The historical-adventure series has so far shown the life of Soviet border guards from 1917 to the 1980s, across the USSR, to the border with the Far East. The latest release should reach our screens in early 2014, with the new season of *Frontier* comprising eight episodes, each in two parts.

Honourable age of museum's exhibit

Ancient exhibit in Zhlobin's State Museum of Local History

According to the Institute of History, within the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, the stone hoe may be 4,000 to 5,000 years old. Found during a dig at Smychok Landscape Reserve, near Nizhnyaya Olba village, in the Zhlobin District, it was

presented to the museum during the *Dozhinki-2013* Republican Festival of Rural Workers.

Yekaterina Tisetskaya, a senior researcher at the museum, notes that Stanislav Guzov, the inspector of the reserve, found the ancient hoe, which will become one of the museum's most ancient exhibits.

Belarusian ladies conquering the world with their amazing beauty

By Yuliana Leonovich

The global fashion industry is again captured by Belarusian beauty, thanks to our Svetlana Kuznetsova winning the Mrs. Universe-2013 pageant — hosted by Aruba, in the Caribbean

The pageant is among the top five most prestigious worldwide, enjoying the same status as *Ms. Universe*: the single difference is that all participating ladies must be married. While fiery Latin American beauties have long been in favour, our Slavonic princesses also have universal appeal, as

Mrs. Kuznetsova's prestigious award confirms.

Svetlana's maiden name — Kruk — is well known to those interested in the Belarusian modelling business, as the brunette won the first national contest — *Miss Belarus-1998* — before becoming a finalist in *Miss Europe-1999*. She took part in *Miss World-2000* and, in 2012, became *Mrs. Beauty Millennium International*. The *All-Russian Teacher of the Year-2010* contest placed Svetlana among the top ten Moscow teachers and she was awarded a government medal for her contribution to Russian education.

Mrs. Kuznetsova graduated from two higher educa-



Svetlana Kuznetsova

tional establishments: Grodno State University (Mathematics Department) and Russia's Supreme School of Economics. She now lectures in mathematics at a Moscow school and liaises with the UN Population

Fund in Belarus, dealing with domestic violence and gender equality. Speaking of her participation in *Mrs. Universe-2013*, Svetlana notes, "I'm pleased to show Belarusian women's strength and independence, by my personal example."

Interestingly, this year's contest saw two winners: one chosen by an expert jury (who voted for Svetlana) and the other by public vote (Mrs. Malaysia).

After the finals, Mrs. Kuznetsova wrote on her Facebook page: 'Friends! Malaysia and Belarus have received major crowns! Puerto-Rico, Canada, the USA and Columbia are among the top four! Hurray!'

Well-known European school

Young Belarusian guitarists among prize winners at 22nd International BRNO-2013 Guitar Festival, hosted by Czech Republic

Vitaly Lapkovsky from Minsk came third in the senior category (16+) while Darya Chernikova from Mogilev also took third in the junior category (under 16) — out of 25 musicians. In total, 120 Europeans and Americans took part in the

contest, impressing everyone with their mastery and talent. Our young Belarusian guitarists were particularly highly praised by the organiser of the Festival, famous Czech classical guitarist Vladislav Blaha. He believes that Belarus is famous for its superb guitar teaching and now occupies a leading position.

The intensive concert programme was evidence of the prestige and high status of the event, opening with the *Flamen-*

co Night concert, in the Spielberg Fortress, starring Oscar Guzmán (Spain), accompanied by dancers and musicians from Andalucía. Oscar Guzman, a student of Jorge Tomez, Oscar Herrero and Mario Cortés, also recently took part in the *Guitar Renaissance* Festival in Gomel.

Evening concerts featured Greek Eleftheria Kotzia, Matthew McAllister from Scotland, Vladislav Blaha and virtuoso violinist Pavel Šporcl. Polish

Marcin Dylla, a laureate of 19 international awards, played especially well, as did French Judicaël Perroy (whose visit to Belarus is expected in December).

According to Mr. Shoshin, a jury member and prominent Gomel guitarist and composer, the next guitar events in Belarus are the International *Guitar Renaissance* Festival, scheduled for November, and the *Guitar Renaissance* contest, due in April 2014.