

Place for warmest friendship

Dozhinki holiday celebrated with Avgustovsky Canal in the Culture of Three Nations Festival

By Tatiana Smirnova

From early morning, people began to gather at Dombrovka sluice, listening to music and meandering among the many attractive stands. The harvest festival on this picturesque bank of the Avgustovsky Canal naturally included plenty of food and drink, including shish kebabs, fish soup and sweets. Children played beach volleyball, rope tug of war, kettle-bell sports and darts, while crafts connoisseurs enjoyed a fair of decorative-applied-arts at the regional House of Handicrafts.

Various competitions were held for agricultural co-operative societies and cultural establishments across the Grodno Region: huge pumpkins and fruit trees were judged for their size, taste and beauty, while recipes for fried pork, pies and draniki (potato pancakes) were put to the test. Crafts goods made by hand were also judged and prizes awarded.

Among the guests were the beautiful entrants for *Miss Supranational-2013*; arriving from



Children's dancing ensemble Bliskavichka Various well-known groups from Belarus, Lithuania and Poland perform at Avgustovsky Canal

81 countries — including Switzerland, France, Guadeloupe, Latvia, Southern Africa and Canada — they cast diets aside in their eagerness to sample the aromatic delicacies on offer.

After a solemn concert, buses began to arrive bearing groups from Poland, ready for the 13th Avgustovsky Canal in the Culture of Three Nations Festival. Organised by the Grodno District Executive Committee and the Union of Poles in Belarus, it's a wonderful example of cross-border liaison. Alexander Berbenya, the Consul General of Belarus in Białystok is keen to see a similar event hosted in Poland and Lithuania, noting, "We hope to hold the next festival, in August 2014, on the other side of the Avgustovsky Canal, drawing together our three nations. Our family tree includes the roots of many nationalities and, here, everyone can become acquainted with the best examples of national culture. It's a place to strengthen our nations' cultural, tourist and economic ties."

In all, 19 Belarusian and Polish groups took part in this year's festival, including public associations of Lithuanians from Lida and Voronovo. Ivan Matyulevich, the chairman of 'Gimtine' from Voronovo noted that it wasn't his choir's first trip. *Primaki* and *Kurpyevsky* folk choirs also arrived, from Poland, each giving a 20-minute performance. The Polish, Lithuanian and Belarusian groups provided continuous entertainment, and the festivities ended with a disco, enabling guests and hosts to make new acquaintances and share impressions.

Stage fantasy with national flavour

Global premiere of *Vytautas* at Belarus' Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre, in early September

By Andrey Belousov

The country's major musical stage has launched its 81st theatrical season with a home-grown play portraying 14th-15th century machinations to rule the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The struggle between brothers Vytautas and Jagailo, as they plot to hold the throne, gives audiences love, treason and betrayal. Vytautas, in love with gentle Anna, is presented as a true warrior: clever and brave. Jagailo is more cunning and reserved, although also a strong warrior, and Queen Jadviga is both arrogant and strong-willed. The Black Man and White Fool create an atmosphere of tense intrigue.

The ballet features strong male dancing, supported by female characters, notes choreographer Yuri Troyan — a People's Artist of Belarus. He explains, "You may love or hate the performance but it will certainly grip your soul. We've done just as we wished."

Conductor Vyacheslav Volich

adds that the show is accompanied but ingenious yet modern music, recreating the atmosphere of bygone times, mixed with a contemporary dramatic feel. "Mr. Kuznetsov has chosen expressive, Slavonic-style melodies in his original score," stresses Mr. Volich, adding that the show may remind audiences of works by Sergey Prokofiev and Igor Stravinsky.

The theatre's leading soloists are taking part: Olga Gaiko, Irina Yeromkina, Lyudmila Khitrova, Anton Kravchenko, Yuri Kovalev, Oleg Yeromkin and Ivan Savenkov. The libretto is by Alexey Dudarev — an Honoured Figure of Arts of Belarus and a laureate of the USSR State Award. Meanwhile, Lenin Award holder Ernst Geidebrekht is the Artistic Director of the show.

Interestingly, the Bolshoi Theatre is launching its second season in a row with a national premiere: in 2012, it staged a new version of Dmitry Smolsky's *Grey Legend* for its opening night.

Miss Supranational-2013 goes to the Philippines

By Yuri Pinchuk

Minsk Sports Palace hosts final of prestigious international beauty pageant

The top-five, unfortunately, did not include a Belarusian beauty. The Philippines' Mutya Datul took the crown, with Mexico in second place, followed by girls from Turkey, Indonesia and the Virgin Islands. Of course, all 83 young women were talented, intelligent and beautiful in their own right, making the contest extremely difficult to judge.

Belarusian Veronika Chachina appeared in an unusual dress, made by designer Natalia Lyakhovets, in white and dark blue, with a woven belt adorned with Belarusian ornaments and knitted inserts. Swarovski crystals and golden ribbons completed the look, while the dress had a long train on which was painted a picture. The jury praised Veronika's beauty and the intricacy of her dress, awarding her the title 'Miss Supranational Europe'.

Mutya Datul, 21, a student from the Philippines, received her crown from last year's winner: Belarusian Yekaterina Buraya. The 2012 competition was held in Poland.

Gerhard Parzutka von Lipiński,



Veronika Chachina is awarded the Miss Supranational Europe title

the Director of Nowa Scena, one of the main organisers of the show, tells us, "The winner receives \$25,000 and undertakes an intense schedule for the year, representing our competition. She'll participate in fashion shows, advertising shoots and charitable events worldwide." At a press conference following her crowning, Mutya noted that she'll be spending the sum on treatment for her sick mother, "My mum is ill, and she needs funds so I'll spend

the prize money on treatment and medicines." She admitted that she'll never forget visiting the Belovezhskaya Pushcha and Father Frost's Residence. "While there, I behaved like a child," she said. "Belarus for ever remains in my heart."

The title is her second at the competition, having been named Miss Individuality earlier. In past years, 'Miss Supranational' has been won by girls from Belarus, Poland, Ukraine and Panama.