

Bright star appeared, burning in the sky

February 14th marks 100th anniversary of birth of People's Artist of Belarus, State Prize laureate Vitaly Tsvirko, who left bright trace in the art

By Victor Mikhailov

Many of today's eminent Belarusian artists consider it an honour to have called him their teacher; many more see him as a national art legend. Mr. Tsvirko's star rose brightly on the horizon, leaving a legacy sought after by collectors and state museums. Undoubtedly, his mid-March anniversary exhibition, at the National Art Museum, will draw large crowds, featuring works from the Belarusian Union of Artists and from Mr. Tsvirko's family.

He was born on February 14th, 1913, in the village of Radeevo in the Rogachev District (now, the Gomel Region's Buda-Koshelevo District) to a family of rural teachers. Probably, Fate itself determined that Vitaly Tsvirko should become an artist, so many factors were conducive to this path: his parents' home enjoyed a creative atmosphere, while interesting people often visited; his father's library was filled with books; and, of course, he met some extraordinary artists, who influenced his creative growth through their professionalism and world outlook.

Vitaly Tsvirko tried to take the best from each of his outstanding teachers and, even as a student, found his own identity quite clearly, giving his portrayal of the world, through the prism of his soul. Each



First day cover features original stamp dedicated to Vitaly Tsvirko's creativity

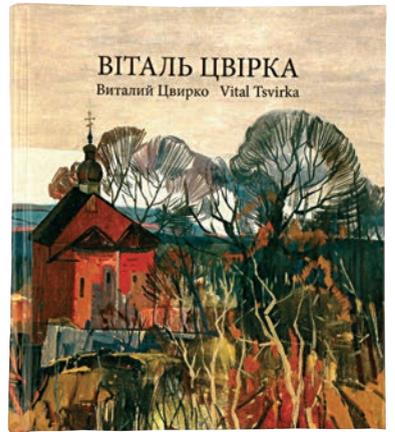
rich experience from those years shaped his artistic creativity and his own teaching style. He soon found that landscapes were the genre best suited to his talent. His canvases reveal the beauty and essence of Belarusian nature and offer philosophical contemplation.

In truth, landscape painting

can be divided into 'before' and 'after' Mr. Tsvirko; he can deservedly be called an innovator and pioneer in creating the epic and lyrical landscape genre — previously unknown in Belarusian art.

Mr. Tsvirko's works are held by the National Art Museum, the Belarusian Union of Artists, by Minsk's

Modern Fine Arts Gallery and by the State Museum of Great Patriotic War History. They are found in various local history museums in Belarus and grace the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow and other museums in the Russian Federation, as well as private collections in Belarus and abroad. The collection of



Tsvirko's pictures at the National Art Museum is viewed as one of the largest worldwide.

Marking the 100th anniversary of his birth, the National Art Museum has planned a number of events. On 14th February, a specially franked envelope was released to celebrate the great artist's contribution (organised jointly by the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Communication, Belpochta, Belarus Publishing House and the Belarusian Union of Artists). Meanwhile, a book was launched detailing his life and works: *Vitaly Tsvirko*, by Natalia Selitskaya (part of the *Famous Artists of Belarus* series). His *Pripyat. Spring* (1966) also went on show in a grand 'solo' exhibition. In addition, students of art school # 1 in Minsk (named after the famous painter) created their own works inspired by Mr. Tsvirko's *Kalozha* (1969).

The Director General of the National Art Museum, Vladimir Prokoptsov, attended the recent anniversary celebration, joined by Deputy Culture Minister Tadeush Struzhetskyy. Other guests included People's Artist of Belarus Georgy Poplavsky, the Director of the Belarus Publishing House, Anna Trusevich, National Art Museum senior research associate, author and compiler of the book Natalia Selitskaya and Vitaly Tsvirko's daughter Tatiana.

Honouring prominent fellow countryman

By Yelena Stasyukova

Adam Mickiewicz and the Theatre project launches in Novogrudok to mark 215th anniversary of poet's birth

The Adam Mickiewicz Museum is welcoming various theatrical groups to give performances based on the life and works of the famous Novogrudok-born poet.

Svityaz — *A History of a Drowned City*, a puppet show based on Adam Mickiewicz's *Svityaz*, was recently presented by Grodno's Maria Iskushnitsa Theatre. *Lonely Ptakh*, a monologue dedicated to the poet's life in Novogrudok, is soon to be presented by the Znich Belarusian One-Actor Poetic Theatre, at the Belarusian State Philharmonic. Other performances are planned as part of the *Live Word* Folk Literary Theatre — hosted by the Maxim Tank Belarusian State Pedagogical University and Minsk's Theatre Ch.

Novogrudok is also to host an international conference involving museums from Warsaw, Opinogóra (Poland), Vilnius and Kaunas (Lithuania), marking the 75th an-

niversary of the Adam Mickiewicz Museum (in September) and the 215th anniversary of the poet's birth (in December).

The first attempt to set up the Adam Mickiewicz Museum in Novogrudok was made in 1920. It finally launched in 1938, only to be destroyed by a German bomb in 1941. It was rebuilt in 1955 and received its contemporary appearance in 1990, following more reconstruction, which included an annex connected to the main building by an underground tunnel.

Five rooms detail the life and works of the poet while others recreate the family's home: a children's room, the father's study and a sitting room. Among the exhibits are personal items once belonging to the poet, with some from his homeland of Zaosie: books, manuscripts, portraits of friends and acquaintances and a bronze model of the A. Mickiewicz monument in Paris (the only exhibit from the pre-war museum). There are nine anthologies of his poetry, translations of editions in various languages, 120 rare editions and many photographs among the 7,000+ items stored.

Winter evening in Skoki devoted to our countryman



Participants of Svetloyar at the Ursyn-Night event

Musical Ursyn-Night marks 255th anniversary of the birth of Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz — journalist, writer, poet and adjutant of Tadeusz Kościuszko — at Niemcewicz Estate Historical and Memorial Museum, in village of Skoki, near Brest

The estate is still being restored, with help from local his-

torians and the museum director, Sergey Semenyuk. Three events have been determined which will be organised annually. In May, there will be a conference entitled *Meeting the Niemcewicz*. Meanwhile, December will mark the anniversary of the conclusion of truce in 1917. Two months ago Skoki hosted an international festival, reconstructing events from

WWI on the Eastern Front and dedicated to the 95th anniversary since the Skoki Truce. The Treaty of Brest was close on its tail. February saw the *Ursyn-Night* concert, marking the birthday of the most famous local resident.

All school children learn about Niemcewicz — the adjutant of Kościuszko. As well as being a revolutionary, he was a reporter and wrote poetry. He is even recognised as the first biographer of US President George Washington.

Brest's Svetloyar club intrigued guests by telling the story of how Tsar Alexander I fell in love with Julian's cousin-once-removed, Yulia, who lived in the village of Nepli, not far from Skoki, on the left side of the River Bug. Local historian Anatoly Gladyschuk researched the story for his book *Niemcewicz. Real Stories*. The love affair resulted in illegitimate children, since the pair were never married. The home built by Yulia's later husband still stands today, awaiting restoration.