

# Ball honours Old New year

The beautiful tradition of a New Year's ball came to life at the Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre on the evening of January 13th-14th

By Yuliana Leonovich

The theatre hosted this dancing marathon for the fifth year. This time, I dressed, powdered my nose and went to personally enjoy the party. I really wondered what its organisers would invent to entertain men and women of fashion for almost seven hours.

The first cars approached the theatre around 90 minutes before its official opening. Scooping their many-layer skirts, women hurried to the cloakrooms and the ladies' room to correct their make-up and hairdo, surrounded by mirrors in a men free environment. Actually, the mood of the ball presupposes that each of its participants is in full dress. This year, even journalists followed the dress code, leaving their 2013 jeans and pullovers at home. My colleagues were unanimous in agreeing that they'd come to the theatre to work rather than to be entertained. Accordingly, they chose formal dress, while accompanying photographers put on tuxedos and bow ties. "It's not very convenient but it's necessary. This is a ball!" photographer Gennady smiled.

The holiday's concept remains unchanged — to welcome in the Old New Year jointly with the artistes. With this in mind, the party was impressed with classical music, bright crystal chandeliers, thematic parties, sparkling champagne and gallants. This ball is an honourable duty for the Military Academy cadets and a pleasant pastime for lonely girls. Actually, this is a kind of 'brides fair' as ladies enjoy every chance to find their love here.

Cadets Denis Zakharenko and Roman Cheshun were taking part in the party for the second year. They admitted that it's really easy to get acquainted with a girl here; they simply need to ask her for a waltz or mazurka. A well-known song works at the ball perfectly 'according to the statistics, there are nine guys for every ten girls'. Accordingly, there are fewer chances for young men to get the gate. But the lucky guys willingly get acquainted



Traditional New Year's ball held at the Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre

with girls they like, and numerous stories of happy couples are known at the Academy. "Last year, our fellow student got acquainted with a girl here and they are likely to get married soon," whispered Denis.

Cadet Sergey Nikiporchik and his girlfriend Natalia have known each other for a long time. Sergey had invited her to the ball, where he danced polka and country dance last year. Pleasingly, Natalia agreed eagerly, "This is a wonderful opportunity to vary our routine, while reviving old traditions... and putting on an elegant dress." The lady admits openly that she's borrowed her ivory white dress from a friend, as it's too expensive to sew a special dress for the occasion.

At 9pm, the party was launched to the accompaniment of Tchaikovsky and Shostakovich and flowing dresses. I had no time to be bored. Detached and taciturn Andrey, a five year student at the Military Academy, asked me for the first waltz. Dances

came one after another, with ladies and gallants interchanging. Steps and breath quickened, skirts and shawls were sweeping and hairdos were beginning to lose their initial sheen. Suddenly, the participants make it worse. Over 150 pairs began dancing the Polonaise, Mazurka and Polka and there was no more empty space left in the hall. Actually, it was no surprise as, every year, an increasing number of people, wishing to contribute to the revival of dancing traditions, are registered. Director Galina Galkovskaya agreed, "Sadly, we lack enough space. However, it's hardly possible to shift our event to a new venue, the New Year ball is our theatre's symbol and brand."

Thematic zones were arranged for all those who want to take a break from the dancing. A cardboard Johnny Depp and George Clooney invited anyone to take a photo with them (although even now, I still cannot understand this Hollywood duo's relation to the Belarusian New Year

ball). The historical section allowed anyone to check their heritage and see if they belonged to the nobility, while The Future Salon and its fortune teller were a true hit.

At 11pm, the theatre gave a musical present to its guests. The artistes dressed and made-up as global stars to congratulate all those present for the coming of the Old New Year. Among them were Freddie Mercury, Mireille Mathieu, Montserrat Caballé and Nikolay Baskov.

When the clock started chiming twelve, each guest received a glass of cold sparkling Sovetskoe champagne. Congratulations, wishes, embraces and kisses continued at the theatre café. At around 1 a.m., most men and ladies hurried home, a working Tuesday was soon to begin. However, some of the most persistent guests continued dancing and celebrating until 4am, when the magic of the New Year night faded away.

We'll definitely meet again in a year. So long!

## Cinema in every genre and for all ages

By Sergey Ivanov

### Yuri Tarich launches amateur film contest — *I Shoot Films* — in Polotsk

Skif TV Company is arranging film selection, with rounds in Vitebsk, Orsha, Polotsk, Borisov and Bobruisk. Employees of the Belarusfilm Cinema Studio will assess works, as will those from the Belarusian State Academy of Arts and the Belarusian State University's Journalism Institute. Skif audiences will be able to vote for their favourite entries from September 1st to November 30th. In all, there will be eight rounds, with winners announced on December 17th: Belarusian Cinema Day.

The event aims to promote amateur film making, while encouraging new talent among Belarusian residents, regardless of age and preferred genre: fiction or documentary.

Yuri Tarich, who opened the event, is a famous Polotsk-born Soviet film director and screenwriter, as well as an Honoured Artist of the RSFSR. He has made a significant contribution to the development of Belarusian film making.

## Pan Tadeusz on French stage

By Irina Sergeyeva

### Yanka Kupala Theatre performances staged in Paris and Beijing this year

The National Academic Theatre of Yanka Kupala hosted the premiere of *Pan Tadeusz*, based on Adam Mickiewicz's famous poem and directed by Nikolai Pinigin. It was the first stage version of the poem at the Belarusian theatre.

The plot progresses over five days in 1811 and one day in 1812, on the banks of the River Niemen, on the eve of the arrival of Napoleon's troops.

Rehearsals began in autumn, with most of the troupe taking part, since there are about 30 male roles. Pavel Kharlanchuk played Pan Tadeusz, Roman Podolyako was the Earl, and Yulia Shpilevskaya and Svetlana Anikei alternated in playing Talimena, as did Marta Golubeva and Kristina Kazak in playing Zosya. After the Minsk premiere, *Pan Tadeusz* went to Paris, where ingenious poet Adam Mickiewicz wrote the work 180 years ago.

This year, the Yanka Kupala Theatre will also perform in China, at the Beijing National Art Theatre, from 25 February until 10 March. The programme will feature a Belarusian-Russian staging of Vladimir Pankov's *Wedding* — based on Chekhov's work. It has already been received successfully in France, Spain, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Romania, Russia and Ukraine. *Not Mine*, based on the story *Nyamko*, by Ales Adamovich, and directed by Alexander Gartsuev, is also planned for Chinese theatre-goers.

# Ringling voices sound over the city of Bug

By Andrey Fiodorov

### 26th International January Musical Evenings Festival of Classic Music takes place in Brest

The first festival of classic music in Brest took place in 1988. For a quarter of a century, musicians and vocalists from 33 countries worldwide have participated in the event, and more than 65,000 people have visited the concerts during this time.

This year, mezzo soprano, Irina Bogacheva, star of the Mariinsky Opera and Ballet Theatre and a People's Artist of Russia, attended the festival

for the first time. Solomiya Priymak (soprano), a favourite of Brest's audience, a soloist from Kiev's National Academic Operetta Theatre, Luka Gaiduchenya (baritone), laureate of international contests from Great Britain and Vadim Kravets (bass), a soloist of the Mariinsky Opera and Ballet Theatre, supported the high note of professional art.

Accompanied by the State Academic Symphony Orchestra of Belarus, under the command of Alexander Anisimov, arias from operas, romances, masterpieces of the world music art were performed.



Italian flute player Antonio Amenduni performs

During the event, guests of the festival could listen to jazz music, including music played by a jazz-quartet from the USA, led by trumpet player Gary Guthman. Performances of another two famous ensembles — the Silesian String Quartet from Poland and New Russian Quartet from Moscow — were also a success.

Together with famous musicians, talented young laureates have appeared on the scene of the Brest's Academic

Drama Theatre. Apart from these performances, two concerts and a traditional Christmas ball took place. Within the framework of the forum, Marek Stefański, one of the best young organists from Poland, gave an organ recital.

Musicians from ten countries worldwide participated in *January Musical Evenings*, including, for the first time, representatives from Chile and Kazakhstan, making this a truly international event.