

Songs, smiles and emotions at the music festival in Vitebsk

By Yulia Leonova

It is both a calling card of the country, and an atmospheric place for the meeting of friends and acquaintances from different countries of the world. By tradition, President of Belarus took part in the opening ceremony. Welcoming guests and participants, he noted that for the 23 years of the *Slavianski Bazaar*, the vogue for art direction and style has changed more than once. Different projects would brightly flare up, but often, were as quickly extinguished, while the Vitebsk Festival itself has only gained in strength, from a modest song contest, it has turned into a real creative competition, and all because its source of strength and energy is the Slavonic culture, one of the most ancient, original and rich on the Earth.

For the years of its existence, the festival has gained many good traditions. Among them, delivery by the President, of the special 'Through Art to Peace and Understanding' award. This time it will go to Moscow, and an old friend of the *Slavianski Bazaar*, the People's Artiste of Russia, Nadezhda Babkina.

In response to the congratulations and kind words, Nadezhda Babkina noted the big role of the *Slavianski Bazaar* in the unification of people. Such activities remind the Slavonic people that, regardless of artificial borders, they are natives of one land, in their culture they have much in common that unites at a genetic level. *Slavianski Bazaar* welcomes



The People's Artiste of Russia, Nadezhda Babkina became the owner of special award

a large number of countries and at the same time preserves Slavonic national traditions, both the old and current.

Alexander Lukashenko handed over another award, the award of the Union State in the field of literature and art, which was presented to the People's Artist of Belarus, Ivan Misko and the well-known Russian architectural researcher, Inessa Slyunkova.

The festival is an important event, not so much for the actors or the journalists eager for high-society news, as for its protagonists — the spectators. Year on year they take vacations that

coincide with the event, storm ticket offices and provide the well-known pop-stars and other artistes with full house performances. Vitebsk attracts talents and admirers from different corners of the Earth. This year, the geography of the fete has amazed people with its scope. Guests not only from neighbouring European countries have come, but also from other continents. Such an interest in the festival is certainly impressive.

The magnificent opening concert lasted until late into the night. Phillip Kirkorov, Stas Mikhailov, Nadezhda Babkina and the *Russ-*

kaya Pesnya ensemble, Pelageya, Nadezhda Kadysheva and the *Zolotoye Koltso* ensemble were amongst the performers that appeared on stage. At around midnight, the Russian artistes gave their place on the stage of the Summer Amphitheatre to their foreign colleagues. The violin of the most Belarusian Norwegian, Alexander Rybak, glittered here and Sophie Ellis-Bextor's smile sparkled. Together, the audience together echoed the Italians *Ricchi e Poveri...* The *Slavianski Bazaar* sounded again, at the top of its voice, for the whole world and the beginning was rather promising.

Eminent guests continued to arrive to Chagall's native land. The special Dvina train has, for the two decades of the festival become as much a symbol of the *Slavianski Bazaar*, as the cornflower and the Summer Amphitheatre. Experienced journalists learnt long ago that the platform of the Vitebsk railway station is, at times, dazzling with sensations no less exciting as backstage at the Summer Amphitheatre. That is why they set their alarm clocks for 4am, in order to have time to meet star guests at the station, arriving on the Moscow train, like Sergey Yursky, the People's Artiste of Russia, who brought to his new work to Vitebsk, a staging of *Flights with Angel. Chagall*.

"It is a performance for those who prefer something more traditional rather than theatrical experiments, although this staging also possesses boldness. First, I act here not only as a director, but also as the performer of nine roles at once, including the main character — Marc Chagall. Secondly, we define the genre of this performance as a satirical parody, though it is clear that the plot of Chagall's life from Vitebsk to Paris and his creativity is a rather difficult theme. I worry very much about introducing this work here, in the homeland of the master. I hope, we will not disappoint the spectators," Sergey Yursky concluded.

Natalia Tenyakova, who arrived with Sergey Yursky plays the role of Chagall's mother in the performance. This creative duo have collaborated for many years.

Artur Mikhailov prefers harmony

By Mikhail Svetlov

Artur Mikhailov, representative of Belarus at the 23rd Vitebsk - 2014 International Contest of Pop Song Performers, prepares for his performance in the semi-final with the help of auto-training

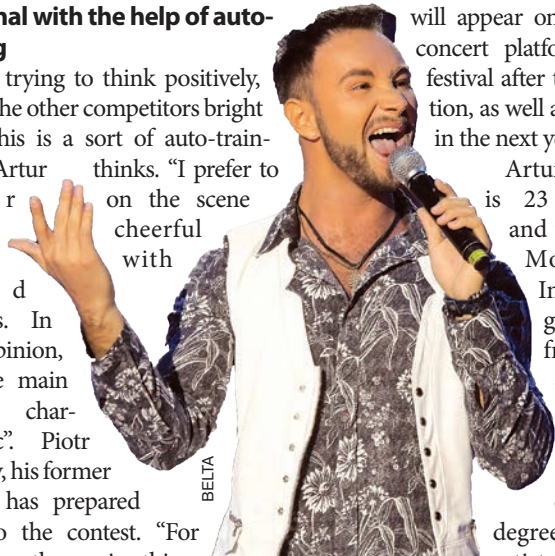
"I'm trying to think positively, to send the other competitors bright ideas. This is a sort of auto-training," Artur thinks. "I prefer to appear on the scene in a cheerful mood, with good thoughts. In my opinion, it is the main artistic characteristic". Piotr Yelfimov, his former teacher, has prepared Artur to the contest. "For Mikhailov the main thing is to present himself and our country well, but not to fight for first place," he said. He is happy about the benevolence of the participants and says that such an atmosphere is important for all artistes.

21 performers will fight to get into

the main competition, but only 15 can reach the final. For the first time, Mexico is represented in the contest. Kim Breitburg, Honoured Artiste of Russia, has become the chairman of judges of the adult contest. Artistes who don't reach the finale will appear on one of the concert platforms of the festival after the competition, as well as participate in the next year's contest.

Artur Mikhailov is 23 years old and was born in Molodechno. In 2013, he graduated from the Shirokov Institute of Modern Knowledge with a degree in variety artist, as a singing teacher. Currently,

he is working in the Minsk's Youth Variety Theatre and sings the leading part in the *Allure* Gipsy show. He sings in Russian, Belarusian, Greek, English, French, Serbian, and Spanish.



Artur Mikhailov

From violin performance to wild wolf howling

By Veniamin Mikheyev

Violin, opera, folk melodies and even wolf howling: the first day of the 12th International Children Music Contest — Vitebsk-2014 — dazzled audiences with its variety of styles and genres

In the first contest, participants sang a song by a composer of their country in their native language. The representative of Belarus, Zinaida Kupriyanovich, opened the programme. Behind the scenes, the girl admitted that, despite the fatal motives of her song *New Day*, she prefers to listen to western pop and rap stars.

Each young contestant tried to be notable and to be remembered. The participant from Bulgaria, Gabi, played violin, Katrina Paula Diringa from Latvia sang *Wolf's Song* in an original way and the contestant from Lithuania, Saule sang *Blues of the Toothless*. Russian, Maria Yermolaeva, showed her strong vocal approach in an operatic offer, and with bated breath, spectators listened to national tunes performed by Georgian, Lizi Shavgulidze.

According to the Belarusian contestant, Zinaida Kupriyanovich, from



Zinaida Kupriyanovich performing

the moment of a draw, most part of her time has been devoted to preparation for the performance. Children try to protect their voice before appearing on stage. They do not speak loudly, do not drink cold drinks and do not eat sweets, especially chocolate.

Nevertheless, Ukrainian, Andrey Boiko, just before the performance, treated other contestants and artistes with souvenir chocolates. "In order that the children can de-stress after the contest. Though we are competitors, we have already had time to make friends, and we wish each other only the best. I keep my fingers

crossed for my friends, and I will try to amaze the public and jury," Andrey Boiko explained.

Young participant from Kazakhstan, Nurzhan Zhumagali, is one of those who support the representative of Ukraine. Nurzhan is a student of the studio of the Honoured Artiste of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Karakoz Akdauletova. For several years she has brought her students to *Slavianski Bazaar*. In 2011, her student, Kuralai Meirambek, amazed the Vitebsk public with her performance of song *To You, Belarus*, in the Belarusian language.