

# Audiences are delighted while jury is surprised

Belarusian Musical Theatre artistes become laureates of international contest

By Lyudmila Minkevich

The actors recall the contest and all their adventures with a smile. However, they initially had mixed feelings on travelling to Russian Yekaterinburg to participate in the 3rd International Young Operetta and Musical Actors Contest. The five Belarusian artistes wondered how the audience would accept them and whether the jury would appreciate them. They worried about performing on a foreign stage, despite having won many awards previously.

With reason, the second award in the 'Musical' nomination was claimed by the Belarusian artistes; they've won three years in a row. This time, Belarusian vocalists Ilona Kazakevich and Alexey Grinenko took the prize. Meanwhile, ballerina Rina Ivakiri took third place

in the 'Choreography' nomination, with her feminine Japanese dance. Grigory Krukovsky conquered the foreign audience with his 'gopak', winning the first 'dance' award for the Musical Theatre. Interestingly, rivals from other theatres urged Grigory not to perform his classical piece, saying that it was out of date; however, his incredible jumps, squats and twirls moved the jury. One member commented, "I've not seen such a 'gopak' since 1969!"

Even the troupe's Artistic Director, Dmitry Yakubovich, won a prize. He participated in the event four years ago but was in attendance this time in a supporting role, assisting in staging. His regular contributions have earned him the 'best partner' award (named after People's Artiste of Russia Alexander Marenich); this is a prestigious title, often called 'a theatrical Oscar'.



Little Red Riding Hood: Generation NEXT is a new staging at the theatre

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**Artistes from the Belarusian Musical Theatre do not take the easy path, staging performances especially prepared for the event and translating little known foreign plays**

They try to perform even a short extract in their own 'theatrical' language. Pleasingly,

they usually succeed and, as a result, the Russian theatre is inspired to stage plays based on performances by our Belarusian artistes after the competition. "It's flattering," smiles Belarusian Musical Theatre Director Anastasia Grinenko. "It's pleasant to realise that we can influence someone. It's also good to know that others in the contest are trying to guess what we'll stage next. This year, the jury stood up and began applauding before our Belarusian performance had even finished."

Foreign critics often note at the contest, "Talented Belarusian actors can sing and dance simultaneously. Ours cannot as yet." Russian

poet and playwright Yuri Entin's lyrics are used in our *Musicians of Bremen* songs. He muses, "I thought that only Madonna could sing and dance in this way; however, she breathes into the microphone while your Belarusian artistes have clear, strong voices."

Our actors are convinced that their victory is due to having a friendly and well-consolidated troupe. "If we performed separately, we'd probably win nothing," asserts singer Ilona Kazakevich. "We have a very good team. Alexey Grinenko translates for us and Dmitry Yakubovich provides choreography. We try to bring to life all their incredible ideas."

## 'I live in the world I have imagined myself'

By Tatiana Pastukhova

**Winner of Junior Eurovision-2005 Ksenia Sitnik leaves open the possibility that she may try in the future for the adult Eurovision**

Next year, Sitnik will be 16, enabling her to apply for this contest. The young performer spoke to journalists at the presentation of her second solo album — *The Republic of Ksenia* — which coincided with her birthday.

"I don't think it's reasonable to go to the adult Eurovision so early, where everything greatly differs from the children's competition. Although I don't exclude this opportunity in future, studies are most important for me now," notes Ksenia.

According to Svetlana Statsenko, her mother and Artistic Leader, it's naïve to believe that by winning the *Junior Eurovision* Ksenia will automatically become best at the adult event. "My attitude towards this contest is rather calm. As soon as I see that Ksenia is ready for it morally and vocally and that she is able to perform a suitable song, than she'll probably apply. Anyway, I don't aim to send her to Eurovision as soon as possible," she said.

The second album of the singer, prepared over four years, includes 11 compositions. "Each of them dis-



Ksenia Sitnik prepares to sing as an adult

plays a small part of me and what I'm doing. My mood often changes, so the songs are very different. However, my favourite piece is probably the *Hero of the Novel*, with Sergey Bily writing music and lyrics for it," admits Ms. Sitnik. A video clip is soon to be shot for this song. All tracks of the album were written specially for Ksenia. *The Boys are Drawing War*, dedicated to the events of the Great Patriotic War, is the only song she's re-recorded, with arrangement made by Victor Pshenichny.

The title of the album — *The Republic of Ksenia* — characterises our Belarusian starlet well. "Each of us is a personality, living in one's own world: either real or the one, created

by oneself. I think I live in the world I have imagined myself. This is my world and my republic," explains Ksenia.

The young artist is likely to become a songwriter soon, since she writes good lyrics. Ksenia has also tried to write music, yet not very successfully. She is now working on a real detective novel, whose secrets aren't disclosed yet.

During the summer holidays, Ksenia does not have any rest. She is going to study at Oxford University to enhance the level of her English.

Speaking about her ideals in music, Ksenia noted that she enjoys *J:Mors* and *Palats* bands most out of Belarusian performers.

## Dnieper Souvenir for Spivakov

Mogilev virtuosos conquer Moscow

By Mikhail Kovalev

Instrumental band *Dnieper Souvenir*, of Mogilev's children's musical school #2, has caused a stir at the 7th International *Moscow Meets Friends* Festival — organised by the Vladimir Spivakov International Charity Foundation.

The band from Mogilev was the only Belarusian representative at the brilliant forum, bringing back two diplomas of laureates and two gratitude letters. Their success can be viewed as a recognition of the domestic

pedagogic school at the highest level. The festival gathered 1,500 young virtuosos from France, Italy, Spain, the USA, Mexico, Israel, China, Sweden, Japan and elsewhere.

The rich festival programme traditionally includes concerts, contests, exhibitions, master classes and Russian violinist, conductor and public figure Vladimir Spivakov personally. It also features the *Virtuosos of Moscow* state chamber orchestra and talented pupils from musical establishments from all over the world.

## Wonders from great-grandmother's trunk

By Mikhail Kirov

**Works by young Belarusian masters on display at children's Treasures from Great-Grandmother's Trunk art exhibition**

European Broadcasting Union member countries have sent around 3,000 works for the event, with around 300 children's pieces chosen by the competent jury for the show, including 29 created by

Belarusian children.

The exhibited works include samples of Belarusian major folk crafts: items made from straw, clay and wood, as well as glass painting, panels and drawings. The best collections of children's works were presented by the Zolak Palace of Nonschool Work, Vetrax Nonschool Work Centre, Minsk's school #200 and the fine arts studio at Senitsa Centre of Culture, among others.