

Conventionality steps aside under pressure of expressive images

Exhibition of graphics at National Art Museum reveals amazing new angles for fine arts

By Victor Mikhailov

An authoritative collector asserted not long ago that graphic art is the major achievement of our Belarusian painters' rich artistic legacy, being alone worthy of admiration. I treated this dogmatic statement rather sceptically, knowing many famous and talented painters among the artistic community — both avant-garde and realistic. In the longer term, think of Chagall, Pen and Khrutsky, I scoffed. However, on visiting the exhibition at the National Art Museum, I gained a new perspective.

The show is devoted to the 1960-1970s 'classic' period of the Belarusian graphic school, displaying works by just four artists, who all celebrate notable birthdays this year. They are bright representatives of a single generation of painters who worked within classical graphic genres — drawing natural landscapes, portraits, historical compositions



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and illustrations.

Their range of interests has been diverse — from botanical themes to painting urban scenes, from the unique beauty of Belarusian landscapes to individual portraits of unusual characters. Their creativity

has sought to use every technique imaginable: bright water colours, expressive linocuts, exact drawings and free mixed techniques.

Each was led to an original manner and style: Mikhail Belsky's laced lines, Grigory Klikushin's ornamen-

tation, Vasily Tkachuk's precision and Yuri Vykhodtsev's monumentality. Each is individual, showing the diversity of Belarusian graphics in those times. Their talents and mastery made them famous but they remained humble, expressing their

gratitude to their own teachers.

The exhibition well confirms that our domestic painters have always been known as true masters, utilising diverse genres — as is easily proven by these interesting works before us.

Strong Belarusian graphics have rich artistic traditions

New edition to mark jubilee

Vladimir Korotkevich's *Savage Hunt of King Stakh* presented in a dozen of countries worldwide

The edition is dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the writer's birth, released with assistance from the Belarusian Cultural Foundation Public Association. It is in four languages — Belarusian, Russian, Ukrainian and English — and has already been launched in Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Latvia,

Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Russian, Ukraine and Estonia.

In Russia, the edition was presented in St. Petersburg and at Novosibirsk's Centre of Belarusian Culture. In Kiev, the Belarusian diaspora and students studying the Belarusian language attended the launch. Three copies of the book have been donated by the Belarusian Embassy to the National Library and National Literature Mu-

seum of Ukraine, as well as to the Belarusian Language and Culture Centre at Kiev National University's Philology Institute.

Vladimir Korotkevich is the first Belarusian writer to address the genre of historical detective stories and has been awarded the State Award for his *Black Castle of Olshany*. Many of Korotkevich's works have also been filmed for the cinema.

From the age of Vikings to Magdeburg Right

National History Museum of Belarus displays two restored banners and *Brilevsky Treasure*

Banners once belonging to guilds of musicians and weavers from the first half of the 19th century are among the unique exhibits on show for the first time, having required extensive and costly restoration.

In line with the Magdeburg Right, professional crafts and trade associations — known as guilds — were established in cities, granted an independent governing system. They existed until the mid-19th century, becoming guild councils after the division of the Rzecz Pospolita and inclusion of Belarusian lands into the Russian Empire. Guild craftsmen were professionals who took an active role in public life, while also bearing compulsory military service and other duties.

Each guild had its own symbolic seals and banners, which usually depicted the images of saints and protectors, alongside an emblem given by the Grand Duchy of Lithuania Statute, or one which reflected the guild's professional activity. Banners on show at the National History Museum are two-sided. One side of a musicians' guild banner has the image of Tsar David with a lyra in his hand and a two-headed eagle on the reverse, while martyred St. Onufry is depicted on a weavers' banner, in addition to the 'Sign of Weavers' Council' inscription. The exhibits will soon become part of the Minsk 1812 exhibition. In to-



Brilevsky Treasure catalogue

tal, the National History Museum is restoring seven banners from various guilds.

The rare *Brilevsky Treasure* collection is also on show. This largely comprises coins and other artefacts from Viking times found on Brilevsky Field near Borisov — famous as a crossing place of Napoleon's retreating troops across the Berezina River during the Patriotic War of 1812. The treasure comprises 290 Arab dirhams and fragments, ten small weights for weighing silver, a fragment of a silver neck grivna (a torque necklace) and a Frankish sword.

The restoration of banners and the *Brilevsky Treasure* collection are part of a joint project by the National History Museum of Belarus and Japan Tobacco International, which provides financial assistance to the museum. By 2013, this foreign company will have injected up to \$200,000 into the museum's cultural projects.

Star jury selects the best

By Eduard Pivovarov

Belarusian cellist Ivan Karizna awarded third prize at 14th International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow

Ivan Karizna, 18, graduated from the Republican Music College at the Belarusian State Academy of Music and is now at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris. In 2007, he won first prize at the 2nd Mikhail Yelsky International String Bow Instruments Competition in Minsk and, one year later, took second prize at the 5th International Youth Delphic Games. In 2010, the young man also reached the *Eurovision Young Musicians* finals in Vienna.

The International Tchaikovsky Competition is held once every four years, covering four nominations: piano, violin, cello and vocal. Each has three rounds and Ivan Karizna has become the only representative of Belarus to reach the finals. Belarusian pianist Timur Shcherbakov was knocked out after the first round while singers Nadezhda Kucher and Dmitry Demidchik completed their participation in the second round. Dmitry was honoured with a spe-



Ivan Karizna worthily performs at Moscow competition

cial prize from the judges however.

The first cello prize went to Narek Hakhnazaryan from Armenia, with Russian Daniil Trifonov named the best pianist and Sun Young Seo and Jong Min Park from South Korea recognised as the best singers. No first violin prize was given.

The 14th International Tchaikovsky Competition took place in two cities — Moscow and St. Petersburg — for the first time, with pianists and cellists competing in Moscow and violinists and singers gathering

in St. Petersburg. Over 100 musicians from 29 countries entered the prestigious event, judged by celebrities such as pianists Vladimir Ashkenazy and Denis Matsuev, violinists Viktor Tretyakov and Sergey Stadler, singers Yelena Obraztsova and Olga Borodina, and other outstanding musicians. The jury was headed by Van Cliburn, an American pianist who achieved worldwide recognition in 1958 when he won the first quadrennial International Tchaikovsky Piano Competition in Moscow.