



Gala concert of festival of music and poetry, in Molodechno, unites best performers on new, eye-catching stage

Festival's songs are its treasure

Molodechno festival loads its second decade of existence, entering whole new level

By Pavel Velikhov

It's a true holiday for art lovers, boasting its own history and image. Few might have expected that it would undergo such dramatic change in its 11th year but a wonderful new stage and an expanded genre palette have caused a true stir among performers.

Yekaterina Khudinets was awarded first prize among the 21 singers, to her great surprise. She is fond of jazz, singing exclusively in English and, two years ago, took a Grand Prix at the International Jazz Festival in Lithuanian Panevezys. In Molodechno, Yekaterina performed *Ballad of Four Hostages* — a true experiment. "This year, I graduated from the Arts College, entering the Culture and Arts University's Pop Vocal Singing Department. My teachers suggested

that I take part in the Molodechno contest but, in all honesty, I didn't believe I was strong enough," she admits with modesty.

People's Artist of Belarus Mikhail Finberg, the artistic leader of the National Academic Concert Orchestra, chaired the event. He's convinced that such contests support the country's successful culture of singing. Speaking of why no one was awarded a Grand Prix this year, he notes, "For a single reason: we want to enhance the level of Belarusian song performers in the future. To do this, we need new aesthetic categories. The national song has changed, as has the approach to its assessment. We're searching for artistes who can combine wonderful vocals with a new interpretation of musical material."

"I loved this year's contestants. They were modest and worthy

people from all over Belarus, each sincerely interested in our national culture," he adds. During round table discussions, Mr. Finberg spoke of the revival of our national song heritage. He hopes to see a response from singers and songwriters but admits, "It doesn't depend on me as there are many components. We need to update the recording of national material in a professional studio, using experienced musicians."

Mr. Finberg has performed on various stages but, speaking of the Molodechno site, notes, "I was captured by the Summer Amphitheatre's concert stage. It's a true European stage, which is ready to host any modern forum. It's convenient to work and stay here and it perfectly suits the surrounding landscape."

Molodechno has witnessed great

change, with local residents feeling pride and happiness for their native city as

they promenade through Pobedy Park, by the Summer Amphitheatre. Families and friends come to take not only fresh air but photos — by the beautiful mini-fountains and by the recently built fountain designed by Vladimir Zhanov. Called 'Fern Flower', it is enchantingly alluring (rather than vulgarly erotic). The city is becoming more European and the festival spirit suits it perfectly — as a suntan suits a face.

The Republican Contest of Young Pop Song Performers has become the major attraction of the festival. Culture Minister Pavel Latushko admits, "It's extremely important to realise that we should shift to Belarusian songs not only for festivals but in our everyday life. Judging by the number of city residents and guests promenading, it's clear that such events are in demand."



Yekaterina Khudinets

Ordinary articles amaze with deep philosophical meaning

By Dmitry Neversky

Unique international open air ceramic workshop held in Bobruisk

Art-Zhyzhal first took place in 2003, initiated by Valery Kolytgin — a ceramist well known in the city. He was later awarded the 'For Spiritual Revival' prize.

"Of course, we were taking a risk, as the venture could have failed," recalls Valery. However, the concerns were unnecessary. Even the first workshop gathered a dozen ceramists from five countries. Initially, masters from neighbouring Russia, Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia and Poland primarily attended but, in the course of time, they were joined by colleagues from further afield: Germany, the UK, Bulgaria, Moldova and Venezuela. This year, the open air workshop gathered ten states, with Turkey and Kazakhstan coming for the first time.

The Georgy Poplavsky Art Museum hosted a traditional exhibition of works created during the forum. "Our workshop is unique in Belarusian fine arts, gathering over 200 participants to date," noted Bobruisk Mayor Dmitry Bonokhov, in his opening speech.



Each work at open air workshop is a small masterpiece

"Its geography is ever expanding, with ceramists bringing their national culture to us. With this in mind, we've always supported *Art-Zhyzhal*, despite any difficulties."

"It's my first time at *Art-Zhyzhal* but I feel as if I've been coming for a long time," smiles Kemal Tizgol, from Turkey's Antalya. "We've gained closer acquaintance and I'm so impressed with what I've seen and heard. I'll take all my impressions home. I'm thankful to the organisers of this ceramic festival and hope to meet everyone again next year."

Art-Zhyzhal participants were awarded with diplomas and souvenirs, alongside praise for their expressive creativity. After the work-

shop, the articles created under the *Ceramics in Architectural Space* theme went on show: *Old World* (by Asya Vakhmistrova, of St. Petersburg), *Time for Life* (by Magdalena Zborowska, of Poland), *Two in a Boat* (by Sandra Naumova, of Bulgaria) and other pieces. Famous Bobruisk ceramist Anatoly Kontsub showcased several of his works — all attractive in their preciseness and artistry. Seemingly ordinary objects were imbued with deep philosophical meaning.

The Circle of Fire exhibition is currently in Bobruisk, but shall soon tour Mogilev, Vitebsk and other Belarusian cities. Hundreds of art lovers will be able to enjoy the unique show.

Master class from famous cinema maestro

By Irina Dobrodeyeva

Teachers and students from Grodno's Yanka Kupala State University have enjoyed a unique opportunity to learn about the art of cinematography via master classes with prominent Polish director Krzysztof Zanussi.

They spent a whole week at Mr. Zanussi's house in Warsaw, studying his works and grasping the secrets of

script drafting. They also visited exhibitions and museums, while taking part in round table discussions and discussing culture and art, music and cinema, as well as promising creative plans and ideas.

The group learnt about the work of a camera crew, director and his assistants, producers and actors, taking a tour of the TOR Film Production Studio, headed by Mr. Zanussi.

Belarusian beauties enjoy success at pageant finals

By Yelena Stasyukovskaya

'Miss Belarus 2010' — Lyudmila Yakimovich — becomes first runner-up at Miss Supranational

Lyudmila recently supplemented her 'Miss Belarus 2010' title, becoming the first runner-up at *Miss Supranational 2011*, in Polish Plock. Monika Lewczuk from Poland was crowned 'Miss Supranational 2011'. Girls from 70 countries took part, with the finals preceded by a 20-day marathon across Poland; contestants worked

with choreographers, photographers and stage directors.

Miss Supranational has been held for three years in Poland now, with Plock amphitheatre hosting the finals of *Miss Supranational*, *Miss Polski* and *Miss Polski Nastolatki* over a period of two days. In 2009, Belarus' Marina Lepesha was also the 'Miss Supranational' first runner-up.

Grodno student Lyudmila Yakimovich won 'Miss Belarus 2010' after entering such a contest for the first time; she also took the 'Miss Photo' title.