

Performance working as accurately as a Swiss watch

Yanka Kupala National Academic Theatre premieres *Night Before Christmas* 'theatrical fantasy', staged by Artistic Leader Nikolay Pinigin

By Vasily Petrovsky

Winter has come, bringing romantic New Year holidays. As is traditional, our theatres are rehearsing well in advance.

Mr. Pinigin has managed to lighten Gogol's play, without using excessive psychology or mysticism. The costumes are beautiful and the music inspirational and mischievous, composed by Andrey Zubrich. A devil rockets into the sky on a stove and those in disguise dance while true Ukrainian Kolyady songs are performed and Zaporozhye Cossacks relax on the roof of an imperial palace. New Year amusement reigns as actors play the clown, with

touches of farce, sitting in woven baskets which suddenly overturn, as if in a Chaplin comedy.

Artem Borodich plays blacksmith Vakula enchantingly, like a handsome model from the cover of *Men's Health*. He has no idea of the language of love but is ready to sacrifice all for the sake of beauty Oksana. Two young primas from the Kupala Theatre — Anna Khitrik and Svetlana Zelenkovskaya — play the role of Oksana in turn. Khitrik's Oksana is flirtatious and unpredictable, aware of her beauty yet without conceit. She yearns for love. The devil, played by Pavel Kharlanchuk, is a trickster and deceiver with

an engaging personality; we cannot help but love him, as he speaks directly to the audience, as he ca-pers about.

The playful style and mocking chaos of the Kupala Theatre has a clear inner structure — as perfect as the mechanism of a Swiss watch. Each small screw — and actor — has its part to play.

As if in a children's game, the action stops almost at the peak of our amusement, with Vakula presenting Oksana with festive boots. She gives him her heart and all the happy characters take a bow to the audience. Fairy tales, especially at Christmas, should always end well.



Artistes Anna Khitrik and Artem Borodich perform harmoniously

Parisian dreams of exhibition



Larissa Noury Shakinko not lost in Paris

By Alina Grishkevich

Belarusian artist and colour expert Larissa Noury Shakinko — who lives and works in France — gives master classes at Paris' L'Ecoles Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts

The master classes included lectures and book presentations. The mayoral office of Caen (the capital of Lower Normandy) entrusted Ms. Noury Shakinko in creating a colourful map of the city, depicting its landmarks in her own unique style. She has lectured in Brussels and at the Sorbonne Urban and Regional Planning Institute

this year. In June, she presented her books on colour in Zurich and launched a new programme on colour harmony at a forum of the International Colour Association (of which she is a member).

Ms. Noury Shakinko's books are used in the teaching of art and architecture at French higher educational establishments; the National Library of Belarus is depicted on their pages. She advocates the use of natural colour schemes in city planning which unite different specialists: architects, city planners, landscape designers, artists and designers from around the world.

The artist has lived in

Paris for over ten years, with her family. She is an international level colour expert in design, art and architecture, participating in numerous foreign shows, and has enjoyed 26 personal exhibitions: in France, Portugal, South Korea, Spain and the USA. In March, around 30 of Ms. Noury Shakinko's pictures were on show at the Parisian ARTESIENNE, in Montmartre. Meanwhile, in September, she gave a well-received show in Bulgaria, which then went to Paris in October and to Switzerland in November.

Ms. Noury Shakinko has not yet exhibited in her homeland of Belarus but dreams of doing so.

Classical pieces good in vocal

Poetic lines by Heinrich Heine presented in Belarusian and German at House of Friendship in Minsk

The literary and musical evening was dedicated to the German classical writer's works being translated into Belarusian. The Deputy Head of Mission of the German Embassy to Belarus, Peter Dettmar, recited verses in German while the First Secretary of the Foreign Ministry's Chief Department for Europe, Alexey Zhbanov, read them in Belarusian. Extracts from Heine's *Travel Pictures* were performed, verses were sung by Alexey Zhbanov in German and Belarusian, and *Brevis* folk band played, from Minsk's school #13. Attending were students from Minsk's State Linguistic University and admirers of Heinrich Heine, the poet, publicist and critic.

Belarusian classical writer Maxim Bogdanovich was the first to translate Heine's works into Belarusian, sensitively reflecting the lyrical feeling of love, compassion and sentimentalism unique to his verse. Contemporary Belarusian authors are still translating from German into Belarusian.

Exposition explores theatre history

By Olga Bogacheva

Regional Local History Museum celebrates 85th anniversary of Vitebsk's Yakub Kolas Theatre, describing the history and contemporary life of the theatre

The exhibition, entitled, *National Academic Drama Theatre named after Yakub*

Kolas: We Remember Everything, was initiated by People's Artiste of Belarus Svetlana Okruzhnaya. It includes costumes worn by leading actors, alongside props and historical photos, old playbills and items unique to the theatre. Besides these rare exhibits, visitors will be able to see other artefacts which ex-

plore the contemporary life of the theatre.

A monument was recently unveiled at Fiodor Shmakov's grave (People's Artiste of the USSR and laureate of the State Award of Belarus). The theatre legend died in May 2009, having worked at the Vitebsk theatre since 1941. He conquered the hearts of

the public with his talent and skill.

The Yakub Kolas Theatre is the only national theatrical company in Belarus to be based in a regional centre, playing a great role in the aesthetic and civil education of the region's residents. Its performances enjoy constant success and the theatre is also

well-known abroad. It has performed *Chagall... Chagall...* at various international theatrical festivals: in England, Scotland, Italy, Poland and Moldova.

The theatre has proved popular during tours of Russia and Ukraine and is now known for being a hothouse of national drama trends.