Heavenly horses canter around ring

Turkmen speech rings out at Belarusian State Circus

By Viktar Korbut

Galkynysh (Revival) acrobatic horse troupe have brought true Akhal-Teke horses to Belarus — the pride of Turkmenistan — as depicted on the country's coat of arms. Akhal-Teke are called heavenly horses, being thought the most spiritual, as well as the cleverest and most passionate.  

Their delicate and graceful movements seem almost mythical, thrilling audiences with their silky beauty.

The Turkmen dzhigits performed wonderful acrobatics on their horses, led by Piggy Bairamdurdyev, an Honoured Figure of Culture of Turkmenistan. His love of his horses is in his blood, making with the troupe a joy to behold. He tells us, "Horses are special animals for the Turkmen and Akhal-Teke are our true pride. They are known for their elegant bearing, as well as their fluid, beautiful movements."

Dunya Babaeva, an acrobat with Galkynysh, tells me about one trick which required six months of practice, "We build a pyramid with our bodies, which is a serious test of strength; I have to hold two girls with my hands."

The circus programme currently includes Belarusian riders also, in addition to trained bears and trapeze artists.

Pupils become colleagues

German artist and volunteer Matthias Jurke teaches Belarusian children to draw in an unusual manner

By Inna Yurchikova

The sun, houses, ships and animals are common themes for children's paintings — as seen at the international art charity exhibition: Children Welcome Children. However, their style is rather unusual, being influenced by German artist Matthias Jurke. He works worldwide with orphans and disabled children has helped them explore their talents, painting wood with acrylic paints.

"Every child is an artist but not all love to paint with water colours or felt pens. My technique convinces them that their artwork is beautiful. I pass on my skills, making them my fellow artists. The Belarusian exhibition features works by children from Germany, Poland, Ukraine, Norway and Romania — which allow their creators to say 'hello' to Belarusian children, while inviting them to send greetings in return," explains Mr Jurke.

The master classes attracted over 18 years. He has a friendly and interesting family, with five children — all of whom are very artistic. They write poetry, play music and participate in charity projects. His house is always full of guests, with some turning up mysteriously to receive shelter," Natalia smiles.

The artist, with his colleagues and assistants Inessa and Lida, plans to next visit Moldova and, probably, Lebanon, gathering more drawings from this orphanage to attend his master classes in his native city of Michendorf, in Germany. "Participation in our organisation's contests and projects won't turn all children into future professional artists or singers but they'll certainly learn skills useful in later life," asserts the Head of the Belarusian Children's Fund, Alexander Trukhan. "This project also helps establish contacts between children from different countries — via art."

The Fund helped organise the trip while Natalia Marchenko of the Belarusian Union of Artists helped set up the exhibition, "We've known Matthias for over 18 years. He has a friendly and interesting family, with five children — all of whom are very artistic. They write poetry, play music and participate in charity projects. His house is always full of guests, with some turning up mysteriously to receive shelter," Natalia smiles.

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