

# Best-loved ballets and concerts in ancient castle

*Bolshoi Theatre Evenings at Radziwill Castle Festival* hosted by Nesvizh

The festival of opera and ballet launched on 21st June with a concert featuring leading opera soloists and a string quintet called *Serenade*, inside the theatre hall of the castle. Meanwhile, the courtyard of Radziwill Castle hosted an

outside staging of Tchaikovsky's legendary ballet *Swan Lake*, conducted by Nikolay Kolyadko, Honoured Artist of the Republic of Belarus.

Nesvizh Roman Catholic Church of the God's Body opened its doors to



*Swan Lake* performed in courtyard of Radziwill Castle

lovers of Romanticism on 22nd June, with a concert of works by 19th century Belarusian composers. Nesvizh Castle courtyard was staging Dmitry Smolsky's opera *Grey Legend* on the same day, with Vladimir Korotkevich's

libretto enhanced by the historic setting. Conducted by Honoured Artist of Ukraine Victor Ploskina, Bolshoi Theatre stars Oksana Volkova, Anastasia Moskvina, Sergey Frankovsky and Stanislav Trifonov were taking the lead

roles. Meanwhile, the Italian comic opera *Rita, or the Pirate Triangle*, by Gaetano Donizetti, was performed in the theatre hall of Ursula Radziwill, on 23rd June.

The fourth *Bolshoi Theatre Evenings at Radziwill Cas-*

*tle* closed with a grand gala concert, conducted by Honoured Artist of the Republic of Belarus Nikolay Kolyadko and by Vyacheslav Volich. It featured popular arias from classical operas and excerpts of the best-loved ballets.

## 'War is barbaric!'

Two films based on Alexey Dudarev's scripts shot by Belarusfilm National Cinema Studio

By Natalia Ivanovskaya

Two films based on famous Belarusian playwright Alexey Dudarev's scripts are being shot in Belarus: *Don't Leave Me* is based on his play of the same title while *Belye Rosy-2* is a continuation of his famous story about the Khodos family, thirty years on.

### *Don't Leave Me*

Shot by Alexander Franskevich-Laye, known for *In June 1941*, which brought him the Presidential Award.

Alexander, why have you returned to the theme of war?

*It's not easy to shoot a war film but it's always interesting. Naturally, they're full of drama and human emotions. However, 'Don't Leave Me' isn't really a war film, as it only has explosions and shooting in the final scene. It's rather a war story, focusing on the fates of its major characters.*

Four slight yet courageous girls launch Operation Bagration, losing their lives in the process. The campaign of summer 1944 was a breaking point in the Great Patriotic War and the film covers a period of two weeks. Led by Captain Mikhasev, a group prepare to infiltrate a German communication point

and set explosives, with the girls posing as actresses. To complicate matters, a love story develops.

**Why do you use Belarus so often for shooting?**

*It's convenient, as you still have machinery, weapons and costumes from those times. Moreover, it's easy to quickly move from one place to another within the country.*



Alexander Franskevich-Laye

**It's probably cheaper to shoot here...**

*Not really — everything costs something. However, the traffic is much lighter than Moscow, where you can waste hours changing location. In Belarus, it can take just half an hour to move to a new spot.*

### *Belye Rosy-2*

We return to the Khodos family, in a film shot by a young Alexander Butor, who is known for his music videos and TV projects. Belarusfilm General Di-

rector Oleg Silvanovich liked Alexander's idea for the film and, despite some initial feelings of reservation from Mr. Dudarev, the latter was eventually convinced to alter his script.

In *Belye Rosy-2*, elder son Andrey is now the head of the family and, tired of city life, he moves to the village. His peace is soon disturbed by the arrival of young businessmen who have plans to build a modern spa in the picturesque spot. Sadly, their plan also involves ousting local villagers. Mr. Khodos attempts to oppose them, defending the village's identity and tranquillity.

Several famous Russian actors are among the cast: Andrey Merzlikin and Galina Polskikh, with Juozas Budraitis in the lead role. Pleasingly, Belarusian Pavel Kharlanchuk, Sergey Zhbakov and Yulia Smirnova also play significant roles.

The film will be screened next spring.

### Playwright comments:

I wrote *Belye Rosy-2* in 2010, simply at my own initiative, although I'm usually against remakes. However, I was keen to continue the fate of *Belye Rosy* and it took me a month to write the script. I'm pleased that Belarusfilm showed interest in my work; the life of



Playbill for *Don't Leave Me*

the village and of the Khodos family never ends.



Alexey Dudarev

*Don't Leave Me* had been staged in theatres in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine and, on seeing it,

## IN-side-OUT... modern play presented in Vitebsk

By Yelena Ivanitskaya

**Yakub Kolas National Academic Drama Theatre premieres performance based on work by contemporary Irish playwright Andy Walsh**

The play about young people trying to find their place in the big city has proven popular in Europe, exploring futility and the search for personal identity. Drugs, sex and violence feature in the play, which was originally written in Irish dialect and set in Dublin, making it a challenge to translate into Belarusian. The play is based on the Russian version, translated by Belarusian State University student Oleg Babarika. *IN-side-OUT, or Dublin Sucks You In* is part of the Yakub Kolas Theatre's repertoire this season, directed by Tatiana Naumova (from Vitebsk but now living and working in Germany).

The cast features only two Yakub Kolas Theatre actors — Maxim Korzhitsky and Anastasia Chistobaeva — with the other parts played by Vitebsk Art College graduates and pupils of theatre studios from across the city.

Mr. Franskevich-Laye was filled with a desire to film it for the big screen. We'd known each other for some time and I know that the theme is one he finds painful, since war is barbaric. It's even more awful when women are involved. In the film, young girls — future mothers — are sent to their death with no real understanding of the danger. The director became interested in the idea and asked me for a script which differs from the theatrical performance. I wrote it for him and we changed a few elements after discussion. You'll see the result on screen.