

Electrician puts a spark into opera

By Victoria Popova

Who is he? From whence did such a striking phenomenon appear in Molodechno? I made inquiries: Alexandrovich is a soloist of the Teatro Comunale (an opera house) in Florence. He lives in St. Petersburg and undergoes training in Italy, he graduated from the Nizhny Novgorod Conservatoire and he won 19 All-Russian and International vocal contests. He started singing in Molodechno, in the maternity home, where he was brought by his mother, Valentina Alexandrovich, a ticket controller-conductor. According to family legend, Vladimir cried so loudly during his first days, that it was necessary to take him from the second floor of the maternity home to the first and to hide him from the other children in the far corner.

However, one cannot hide real talent. The story of the life of Vladimir is rather intricate. Until the age of 19, he did kickboxing, received a technical education and became a good electrician. Any housework for this provincial boy was a pleasure. He was just 4 years when his father died and since then he has got used to standing alone for himself and his family. But how did electrician become a soloist of the Florence Theatre? As they say, 'do not switch over'. Vladimir recalls, "I grew up on Vysotsky's records and Soviet films like *Mikhailo Lomonosov*, *The Circus Princes* and *Seventeen Moments of Spring*, each filled with beautiful musical themes. The academic singing bewitched me more and more. When I was 20 years old I realised that I should sing, and I entered the Ogiński Molodechno Musical College."

When he was 20 years old he started playing piano, not with beautiful, classical fingers, but with knuckles broken on sports-mats and punching bags — a rather unique situation. At that time, children

started practising music at 6 or 7 years of age. Of course, at first, Vladimir had a really hard time — his fingers stuck between the black and white keys of the piano — but his fanatical devotion to lessons quickly brought Alexandrovich into the college, where he was one of the first students. He completed it with distinction and went to the Nizhny Novgorod Conservatoire, "I entered without any difficulties. I want to note that in college we had excellent preparation on all subjects. To the honour of our country, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, we managed to preserve our musical schools and the general level of preparation of experts at a very high level. Another thing is that a number of orchestras decrease every year. Many musicians go to work to America, Europe or China."

Alexandrovich was not an exception. This talented vocalist was noted at international contests. Muslim Magomayev presented Vladimir with Grand Prix at the forum of young opera

Alexandrovich his last pupil and speaks of him only in superlative terms, "I am happy to speak about this young Belarusian bass for hours. Vladimir Alexandrovich is a



A year of training is before Vladimir. Studies in Florence represent a wonderful old-world dream. Apart from vocal training, he has painting lessons, fencing, history of arts, riding and a lot of other pleasant things. The artiste is happy that has a very tight schedule. Once, tired with horse riding, he came back from his Florence lessons and sat down to rest near the basilica of Santa Croce, where he noticed at once a memorial plaque to the Belarusian composer Michal Kleofas Ogiński. Amazed, Alexandrovich realised something, 'Here is the person who leads me in life!' But, apart from the celestial, the vocalist has a quite tangible friend and helper in Grig-

ory Soroko, the conductor of the M.K. Ogiński Musical College Symphonic Orchestra of Molodechno, a very clever man, and a great intellectual. Grigory Semenovich, remembers how he had a connection to the occurrence of the Ogiński plaque at the Florence basilica, "We put forward the initiative to place this plaque on the church, where Ogiński was given the last honours. It seemed that we agreed about everything with the representatives of the Italian embassies, but the progress was slow, and the matter stopped for some years. And then we resorted to such a trick: we made a copy of the memorial plaque and established it at our college. We wrote on our sign that the original is located in Florence, thereby shaming the Italians for their sluggishness."

But justice has prevailed. Today, the inspired resident of Molodechno, Vladimir Al-



singers in Helsinki, together with his wishes to learn classical variety vocal. One of his last grants was training in Florence under the well-known baritone, Franco Pagliuzzi. The maestro calls

unique person, and is perfectly prepared. We worked perfectly together, we selected a splendid repertoire. I am sure that my pupil will shine on the opera stages of the whole world."

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native city, "When I arrived in Molodechno after my long wanderings, I saw how magnificent the orchestra was, how wonderful the Palace of Culture was, with its tremendous collective led by the charming, Svetlana Soroko. And all of this is in our city. I immediately wanted to write a concert programme with them. I also invited my friend, pianist, Oleg Vainshtein to join in the work. He works now with both Yelena Vaenga, and Stas Mikhailov, but he comes to us at the first call. Oleg fell in love with Belarus and our orchestra."

During a year and a half, Soroko and Alexandrovich have made five concert programs. Their joint concerts always finish the same. People do not let Vladimir and the orchestra leave the stage. A two-hour performance often turns into a four-hour musical marathon. But the most devoted listener of Alexandrovich is his 17-year-old daughter, Karina, the current Thai boxing world champion. The girl also finished music school and can accompany her father playing *Dark Night* on the piano. However, she likes her boxing as much as her father likes his music. Vladimir does not worry, genetics is genetics. Who knows, what extraordinary turns of destiny we will experience tomorrow. Today the artiste dreams of performing more often in Belarus. He believes that art is deeply national, "I sing many romances. But I am more successful with the works written here, on our land. For example, *I Love* by Vladimir Olovnikov. In each country I've performed this romance I am always asked for the musical score. In each corner of the earth appear unique musical findings. They are also in Belarus, say, in Yevgeny Glebov's music — tender and true. I am very happy that I found a common language with Grigory and Svetlana Soroko, and that we also became friends. And now we return this great music to the listeners."

The collection perfectly fitted in interior

By Irina Sviridova

Relics of Radziwill family returned from Bavaria to Mir Castle for 6 months

The exhibition of portraits of Radziwill princes from the collection of Konstantin Hohenlohe opened at the museum of the Mir Castle Complex.

The unique collection of pictures, art and craft objects, belonging to the former owners of

Mir Castle, was found by experts of the museum in 2012 during scientific research in Bavaria in the Schillingsfürst Palace. At the end of the 19th century, Princess Maria Hohenlohe, a descendant of Radziwill along the female line, brought the collection to Germany. Now Konstantin Hohenlohe, heir by collateral, is the owner of the portraits. An engineer by education, he currently lives in Vienna.

Organisation of the exhibition took almost a year and a half and many private individuals and organisations were involved. "First of all I want to thank the workers of the Consulate General of the Republic of Belarus in Munich and Goethe Institute in Minsk, who took the most active part in the project, and of course, Konstantin Hohenlohe. Thanks to his good will, the relics of the Radziwill family if only

for a while will return to Mir Castle," says the Director of the Mir Castle Complex Museum, Candidate of Historical Sciences, Olga Popko.

The exposition represents the majority of the collection of Prince Hohenlohe: two big portraits and 16 works of smaller sizes. The latest work is dated 1884 and is painted by Vilno artist, Wikenty Slezinski. The authorship of other works is un-

known.

Among heroes depicted in portraits are the most notable representatives of Radziwill family, beginning from their mythical ancestor, Woischund.

Over time the collection was created especially for one large stateroom and now it perfectly fits inside the interior of the Portrait Hall of Mir Castle. The collection will be on display until the 16th November.