



Opening of 16th Slavonic Bazaar in Vitebsk International Festival of Arts dazzles as always

Slavonic Bazaar gathers friends and meets guests

Great musical festival in city on the Dvina River unveils new attractions

By Anna Bondareva

The opening concert of the 16th Slavonic Bazaar in Vitebsk International Festival of Arts gathered many popular artists. Tickets for the four hour event sold out well in advance and the show was broadcast on the Belarus-TV satellite channel to CIS and non-CIS states. All the live concerts from the first and last day of the festival are screened alongside gala-concerts, the children's and adults' musical contests and composers' and jubilee concerts. This year, 300 reporters from 15 countries are accredited to the show, writing on the unique Vitebsk festival. The ten-day Slavonic forum is packed with concerts, interviews with 'stars', film premiers, theatrical meetings, potters' and blacksmiths' workshops, discos, fire-

works, songs over camp fires and jazz parties at the city's cosy restaurants. The Slavonic Bazaar is a true Olympiad of arts.

Fans who return each year have been pleased by the innovations — such as the Summer Amphitheatre, with its metal roof to protect against the rain, and the new video, audio and light equipment installed in the hall and on stage. The huge new photodiode screens make it possible to view the stage from any row. Vladimir Rylatko, Belarus' First Deputy Culture Minister, says, "This year, the Slavonic Bazaar in Vitebsk festival is being reborn to include over 100 events and is gathering about 4,000 people from 40 countries. Everyone who has seen the reconstructed Summer Amphitheatre are full of admiration.

Vitebsk itself is forever improving — with new hotel complexes and architectural features, revamped historical sites and parks. I think, this year, there's more to see than ever and the city is well prepared to welcome its 4,000 guests."

This year's festival offers some new concerts. The Regional Philharmonic Society is to host woodwind concerts featuring Belarusian and foreign musicians. An organ — worth 800,000 euros — has been specially ordered from German Owingen and is now assembled ready. Art lovers will surely appreciate an exhibition by world-famous Mikhail Shemyakin — visiting Vitebsk from the USA to unveil his controversial pieces. The festival's great artistic energy will accompany hundreds of events — creating a wonderful atmosphere.

Since it began, the Slavonic Bazaar in Vitebsk has won many awards — such as honourable diplomas from the International Federation of Festival Organisations (FIDOF) for impeccable organisation, professionalism and performers' mastery. This year, artists from almost 40 countries are taking part, with Africa attending for the first time. Popular performers from France, Italy, Poland and the Czech Republic are taking part, with Rodion Babayan and Ksenia Kolambatskaya representing Russia and Georgy Koldun and Anika representing Belarus at the International Pop Song Performers Contest Vitebsk-2007 — held as part of Slavonic Bazaar in Vitebsk festival. Famous Russian composer Kim Breitburg is to head the jury.



Patricia Kaas — a guest at the festival

Combining the incompatible on stage

By Olga Kiseleva

Psyche's Sisters wins Grand Prix at International Festival of Ancient Art

The Grand Prix of the 9th International Festival of Ancient Art *Bospor Agons* — recently held in Yevpatoria (Crimea, Ukraine) — has been awarded to the Republican Theatre of Belarusian Drama latest effort *Psyche's Sisters*. The show was highly praised by the jury and theatrical community alike with particular appreciation for the original acting and production. The opening night of the musical performance (based on Sergey Kovalev's play) took place in Minsk recently. Producer Sergey Kovalchik has used *Psyche's Sisters* to show the universality of our problems — regardless of the passing of time. Traditional Greek costumes have been given an updated twist by being made from manmade fabrics and the ancient setting mirrors our modern day human passions, our loneliness, our loves, our misunderstandings and our ambitions.

Love is your name

The Harli ensemble, headed by Yevgeny Chalyshev — vocalist and composer of music and lyrics, has its second disc out in five years

It is entitled *Love is Your Name*. The first album — *Native Places* — was quite different. "Initially, we planned to call the new album *Kind People*. However, over time, we realised it was focusing on love," says Yevgeny. "It's difficult to look at your own 'baby' objectively but I'm sure that, even in 10 years, I'll be proud of this album. I have put my soul into it! I'd say it inspires people with positive emotions."

The leader of *Syabry*, People's Artist of Belarus Anatoly Yarmolenko, comments, "Their first album was an experiment; here, we have rich stylistic material. *Harli* manages to be different and familiar simultaneously. It's a pleasure to listen to, being light and modern — in the European way. *Guatemala* and *Moth* are particularly good tracks — with music and lyrics meeting in harmony. I also enjoy the *Kind People* song too, which deals with feelings towards parents. Undoubtedly, this group will gain a place in Belarusian hearts."

Grand Prix from Jurmala

By Irina Timofeeva

Young soloist Yegor Zavatsky of Zhodino wins International Festival of Art for Children and Young People

The Jurmala event brought together talented performers under the age of 21 in three age groups, with three nominations in each: a lyrical song, a dance song and a song from their native country. The jury comprised artists and musicians, composers, stage directors

and choreographers who assessed vocal and dancing skills alongside artistry, presence and originality. Yegor took part in all three nominations and was praised for each, being recognised as best among all the participants. Aged just 13, he is in the 8th grade and began singing seriously five years ago while attending the pop song studio Silver Warble (run by talented teacher Nelli Ambartsumyan). Yegor has been enjoying music and poetry since early childhood; his talent

was soon picked up and his ambitions supported. He has already won many singing competitions, including *Zhodino Spring-2003*, the qualification round of the Slavonic Bazaar in Vitebsk and the International Open Children's Birthday Song Contest in St. Petersburg. The young singer has also taken part in TV programmes. Many people were touched by his song *My Belarus* — performed at Children's Eurovision-2004 selective round. Yegor wrote the music and lyrics himself.

Yegor is already an experienced singer, having performed in public many times. Last year, he participated in the concert tour *For Belarus!* with stars of the Belarusian stage. In November 2006, he reached the finals of the International Competition of Pop Song Performers *Pearl of Berlin*. He also has his own solo CD of 10 songs, all of which are written by famous composers. Well-known composer Sergey Sukhomlin, who has given him most of the songs, produced the album.