



## YOUNG PEOPLE'S ISSUES

# YOUNG TENOR CANNOT RESIST SWEETS AND COFFEE



The young tenor Rafailas Karpis

## The voice broke early

"The leader who was accompanying me looked as calm as a true Belgian and kept the results of the competition to himself, never letting me know "fumed with pretended anger at Vytautas Miškinis, the artistic manager of the Boys' and Adolescents' Choir Ažuoliukas, a sixteen year old resident of Vilnius Rafailas Karpis, the winner of the Grand Prix at the International Competition of the Soloists from Baltic Countries.

At the competition held in the Estonian city of Tartu both the jury and the audience were astounded by Rafailas's voice. "My voice broke early and without any complications which are so common among singers of this age," the singer radiated with joy.

Rafailas not only grabbed the main prize but also the first place among the soloists in his age group (16-18 years).

## Excitement does not interfere with singing

On the first day of the competition about forty participants from Latvia, Estonia and Finland appeared on the stage. Rafailas was the only participant from Lithuania among them. Later in the evening about ten contestants were asked to sing the following day. "Then I felt the breath of victory mixed with some dose of uncertainty," recalled the teenager. "We spent the evening doing sightseeing in Tartu together, but Miškinis would not drop the slightest hint that I might end up the winner. I know that he is objective."

The joyous news was broken to the teenager as he was heading onto the stage. But the excitement could not damage his performance. According to the laureate it always pays not to get nervous before marching onto the stage, but once there you can allow to be carried away by excitement. This way the emotions make the singing more expressive.

## Listened to "The Beatles" a lot

Rafailas feels that lately he has to devote more of his time and energy to music than to classes at the capital's Antakalnis secondary school. But that does not worry an eleventhgrader since in his plans singing and he are inseparable.

In his grade there are a few students, former singers of Ažuoliukas choir who really support him. He was extremely pleased to see among his fans in Tartu a former "oak" who came all the way from Tallinn, where he

studies now, to support a fellow from Lithuania. Rafailas recalls his great passion for The Beatles: he would not listen to any other group till he turned fourteen. Only later encouraged by his teachers he discovered the beauty of classical music. "Though I also appreciate contemporary music," sparingly commented the sixteen year old. He seldom sings at home, except when left by himself.

## No special care for voice

So far a young tenor does not care much about spare use of his voice. As his singing teacher Algirdas Janutas so Rafailas believes that the more a singer fears for his voice, the more he grudges it the stronger odds are that bad luck lurks close behind. So Rafailas does not push away cold milk or hot and spicy food which might be hazardous to other singers.

By the way, once his voice had threatened to play a bad trick on him too and Rafailas was put on medication and had to keep silent for a whole week before an important concert. But luckily everything turned out all right: Rafailas got well in good time with the voice sounding as good as ever before. The sixteen year old singer likes coffee and has a sweet tooth.

"Although once in a while it strikes me that I should start exercising, but truly enough I do not mind being bigger than my peers or friends. When in school's hallways I hear "fatty" thrown at me by suckles from primary classes I guess this is how they want to show their interest in me," the youngster shared his stories joyfully.

Two earrings dangle in Rafailas's left ear, his wrists are adorned by a chain of friendship and a metal bracelet. "It means I like looking great and smart," he laughed. Though before a concert when he has to put on a tuxedo earrings have to go out, especially if they do not match the cuff-links.

Rafailas's clothes are his mother's prime concern. "When she buys a new outfit I rush to her workplace to try it on. Although my voice is never decisive about choosing clothes, but here our opinions usually do not differ," the eleventhgrader said convincingly.

## Recalls Grandma's lullabys

From his teacher Rafailas not only learns how to sing but also how to carry himself on the stage. "When I was younger I looked funny with my elbow on the piano - such was a posture for serious songs. When singing a Lithuanian folk song about matchmakers I cannot help pulling at my lapels and when I want to put a lot of emotion into singing I stretch the arm forward," explained Rafailas.

At the International Contest the tenor sang one song in the Jewish language of Yiddish. It was in this language that Grandma used to sing lullabys to little Rafailas. "They are the most wonderful songs," the guy did not hide emotions. "I am also trying to learn Yiddish well."

The sixteen year old tenor revealed that he had no special wishes or aspirations. Right now all he wants is to become a good pro in this field.

**Daiva KAIKARYTĖ,**  
"Lietuvos Rytas"

On Dec.3, 1999 at the restaurant "The Old Pirate" Hanukkah was celebrated. The feast was organized by the Union of Jewish Students and Youth. On the eve of the feast TV and radio warned about a hurricane approaching Lithuania. As it soon turned out weather-people were right for once: soon the wind picked up strength and speed and became bitterly cold. Each gust left trees with broken branches and our faces covered with snow and rain. Nevertheless over 70 people turned up for celebration which keeping to the old Jewish tradition started an hour later.

Ania Plavina addressed her words to those who forgot the purpose of our gathering and the meaning of Hanukkah: she briefed on the origin of the holiday and its traditions. As if illustrating her words our young talents Alikas Kaganovičius, Inga Balseytė, Saša and Inga Abezhauzai showed a piece of dramatization on the theme.

During the show the performer of the part of Judas Maccabaeus lit the first candle. Then a disco followed with a great disc jockey Andžejus Žukovskis. During breaks merry competitions were held the winners of which were awarded smart and funny prizes which pleased both, the winners and losers and the gathered company. A wonderful tradition of our childhood was also remembered: each participant got Hanukkah gelt -

a coin like chocolate medal wrapped up in golden foil. The table of the feast showed off the traditional Hanukkah meal - potato pancakes - proudly. However they were not as popular as doughnuts which were consumed fast without giving much thought to calories.

The company enjoyed the celebration greatly and parted in high spirits. The feast was a real success and, besides, we saw new faces in our company which gave us hope to see more of them at future gatherings.

We would like to thank people from the Lithuanian Jewish Community and Joint who made this wonderful feast possible.

**Viktorija JAGNETINSKAJA.**

# Guests from P. Skorina School

On December 12, following the invitation of Frida Zimanienė, a group from the only Byelorussian P. Skorina school in Vilnius participated at the presentation of works by members of the Art Studio of the Shalom Aleichem school which was held in the hall of the Jewish Community at 4 Pylimo street.

Our school has been functioning five years now. Being twice younger we were twice as happy to congratulate the Jewish school on its 10th anniversary since the history and culture of national minorities in Lithuania has been the object of our special interest for a number of years.

A few classes from our school visited the Jewish museum and I. Lempertas, a member of Board of the Jewish community was among guests of our school.

And now another meeting! Michailas Percovas, an outstanding artist, described works of his students with deep consideration and charm. You should have seen those wonderful things! Everybody liked works of great talent and spirit executed in every imaginable way of techniques.

The girls looked shy while talking about themselves and the boys looked short-spoken and reserved. Not like their works which spoke loudly in their original language of colours, visions and lines.

When the official presentation was over we all lingered as if unwilling to part. Everybody had to say something, wanted to exchange opinions or discuss some points. We gave tulips as parting gifts and as signs of our gratitude for the wonderful talent of the students of the studio and their teacher. We hope that all students of our school will see those works. We would be happy to start cooperation and exchanging of works.

We said good-bye with hope of new meetings in our hearts. We made an arrangement with F. Zimanienė promising to come to the Jewish community with a concert in nearest months.

**Galina SIVOLOVA**  
Principle of the School  
**Tatjana POKLAD, Valentina IVANOVA,** Teachers

# Ties of Friendship

The activities of the club "Ilan" are not limited by the borders of our community - we crave for new impressions, contacts, communication with our peers and children of the similar age. We wish to see new cities or just as a saying puts it - "to show ourselves and see others".

This year we have opened the season by a trip to Kaunas to which we were invited by the city's Jewish Community and its Youth Club. A 50 seat bus could hardly accommodate all those willing to visit Kaunas and meet friends from the city which is sometimes called "the provisional capital" since before the war Kaunas was indeed the capital of Lithuania.

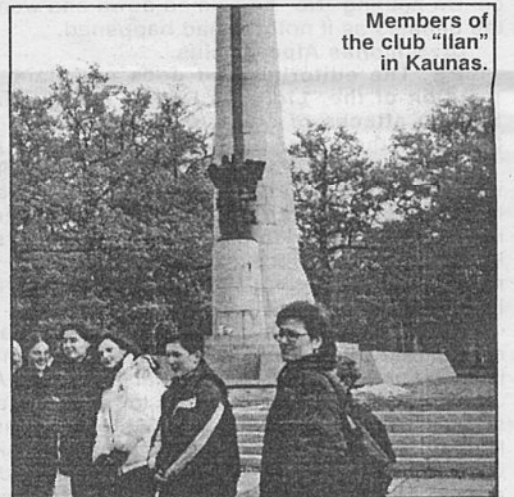
We did our homework by having thoroughly prepared for the trip and for all events included into its agenda. Undoubtedly, the trip to the capital of basket-ball could not do without a basket-ball match. We knew that the match with the Kaunas pros was going to be a tough one. Therefore before the match we swore not to give in easily which helped us a lot in putting up resistance to the pressure of our tall and sturdy and experienced opponents. In the end the friendship gained the upper hand as it is usually said in similar situations. We did not come to Kaunas empty-handed. The madrichs from "Ilan" had prepared a game of orienteering in which all the children could take part. The game took place in the Oak Grove, one of the most beautiful spots in Kaunas. It took an hour till the children running around the park found all the keys to the code which helped to find letters and finally decode the phrase which turned out to be of some importance since it tipped on the venue of our lunch. A hungry but excited company headed towards the Kaunas Jewish Community headquarters where in the classrooms of the local Sunday school the leader of Ilan Ira Dolgunova and the principle of the Sunday school Lena Comik were already busy with the lunch. Our girls did not hesitate long and helped to set the tables. The participants of the meeting devoured the lunch instantly.

Of course, we did not go to Kaunas only for lunch. Most of all we wished to meet each other, to walk around Kaunas, to see all the changes which took place in recent years. We took a walk along Laisvės street and other main streets of the city. Most of the children had last seen Kaunas a couple or more years ago. They agreed that the centre of Kaunas had changed for the better, that it had become more beautiful.

Saying good-bye was the saddest part of the trip. Some of us parted with the friends from Kaunas as if they lived on the other side of the world and as if the only possibility of meeting them would not come earlier than in twenty years. It was twilight when our coach finally pulled from the Pushkin school.

In Vilnius near the building of the Jewish Community quite a number of parents were waiting for the most of us, but senior children ran off home by themselves. Now we are looking forward to meeting friends from Kaunas in our city.

**Irina RAVINOVICH.**



Members of the club "Ilan" in Kaunas.

# News from Shalom Aleichem School

## News from Shalom Aleichem School Anniversary

Recently the Shalom Aleichem Jewish school has become 10 years of age. We celebrated this event at the Hall of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. We sent out invitations to school students, their parents, principles of other schools and some VIPs. The celebration started at 5 p.m. and ended at around 9 p.m. Everybody liked the presentation read by our principle - he talked about how the school was started, how it grew,

etc. Other people also told many interesting things. Then the performance followed. The school's choir sang Dreidel, Rak Be Israel, Jeruśalaim. The film was shown featuring the life of our school and its various events. Our dance group performed too with Chasid Dance, the dance-song Lithuanian Fairy Tale, a sports dance, a dance of the Moroccan Jews and the dance-song Akol Patuach.

Well, while parting the hosts wished us good luck. On the whole the celebration was not bad except for the speeches at the start which were sort of long.

## Radio Station in School

The Israeli Embassy has sent a gift to the Shalom Aleichem school on its 10th birthday - a radio station.

Over the radio now various competitions are announced, occasionally teachers are summoned to the principle's office and during breaks music is played - Jewish or English alternatively. I think they choose good music. It's only a shame that our radio does not cover all rooms and hallways of the school.

## Hanukkah Celebration

Hanukkah is a feast of light, joy, amusement and games. We receive presents on that day. Parents have to give their kids small coins as a gift - hanukkah gelt. We celebrated Hanukkah at school too. In my opinion everything went all right. Many classes had quiz-shows. Like we had to think of the best name for our groups, to invent their count-offs and logos. Or to invent the best way of ...eating a doughnut, etc.

Doughnuts are a traditional meal at Hanukkah because they

are cooked in oil. It's a reminder of a tiny jar with olive oil which the Jewish soldiers had found in the liberated Temple. It contained oil only for one day, but a miracle happened and the oil lasted eight days keeping the Hanukkah light alive and allowing to make a fresh supply of oil. A great variety of names was presented - some funny and some serious. Among them were such names as Light of Menora, Fatty Doughnuts, Doughnuts and Scones, Doughnuts Here and There, etc. This was how we celebrated the joyful feast of Hanukkah.

**Compiled by Vladimir STROGANOV.**