



The Princess Dashkova Russian Centre December 2012 Newsletter

Academic diplomacy

Our academic diplomacy mission reached its height on 28 November when the Centre hosted the AGM of the Scottish Parliament's Cross-Party Group on Russia. The group was addressed by the Russian Ambassador to Britain Alexander Yakovenko. The Ambassador had a meeting with the University Principal Sir Timothy O'Shea and accepted an invitation to give a Montague Burton lecture in International Relations. The Cross-party group meeting was also attended by the Russian Consul General, Sergey Krutikov and the Vice-Consul, Konstantin Kirilin. Dr Lara Ryazanova-Clarke and Dr Luke March welcomed the guests to the Centre and talked about the Centre's mission and activities. The Cross-Party group also discussed educational and advisory collaboration, and language provision in schools.



Meeting the Principal



L: Alexander Yakovenko and the Cross-Party Group. R: Alexander Yakovenko and Dr Luke March

Cultural Events in November



Andrey Plakhov and Raisa Fomina

November was a stellar month for our cultural events. Foremost among these was the first Russian film festival in Scotland that not only attracted large audiences, but also brought some of the most significant names in contemporary Russian cinema to Edinburgh. We organised the festival in association with the Filmhouse and Academia Rossica, with funding from the Centre for Russian, Central and

East European Studies and the AHRC. Four new Russian films were shown: two documentaries and two feature films.

One highlight of the festival was the showing of *Zima, Ukhodi!* (Winter, Go Away!), a fascinating documentary made by ten graduates of the Marina Razbezhkina School of Documentary Filmmaking and Theatre. Closely following the different participants of the winter 2011 protests in Moscow, the filmmakers captured not only the atmosphere and solidarity of the protesters, but also the political and ideological nuances of the various groups of participants. The showing was accompanied by a Q&A session with film critic Andrey Plakhov and distributor Raisa Fomina, during which they answered viewers' questions on the state of the Russian film industry and the future of documentary film. An interview with Andrey Plakhov, recorded at the Dashkova Centre, is available as a podcast: <http://tinyurl.com/dashkova-podcasts>.



Vassily Sigarev and Yana Troyanova

The screening of the film *Zhit'* (Living) at the Filmhouse was also a great success. This powerful film has won a number of prizes in 2012, including Best Directing at the Kinotavr festival and First Prize at the GoEast Festival of Central and East European Film in Weisbaden. Set in the Russian provinces, the film intertwines the stories of three protagonists, each dealing with their own personal trauma and loss. The director, Vasily Sigarev and his wife Yana Troyanova, who played one of the lead roles, answered questions from the audience about the inspiration for and creation of the film, as well as about the importance of Russian cinema today. An interview in Russian with Sigarev and Troyanova is available as a podcast at the Dashkova Centre website: <http://tinyurl.com/dashkova-podcasts>. An English translation will be available online soon.

Another strand of the Russian Film Festival in Scotland was the retrospective of films by Andrei Konchalovsky at the Filmhouse, alongside which the Dashkova Centre presented a very special film event. The

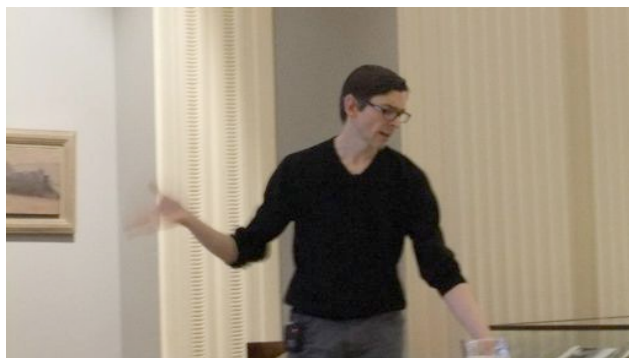


Andrei Konchalovsky

screening of *Maria's Lovers* on 18th November was accompanied by a lecture entitled 'The Films of Andrei Konchalovsky' delivered by Dr Seth Graham of the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, UCL. Dr Graham discussed the development of Konchalovsky's *oeuvre*, from his early Soviet works, to his eclectic post-Soviet career and Hollywood production. After the film, Konchalovsky himself took part in a lively Q&A session with a packed

audience. A recording from the event will soon be made available at the Princess Dashkova website.

Another cultural event sponsored by the Centre was a lecture by Merlin James on 16th November. Glasgow-based artist James is the curator of a new exhibition of the work of the Russian artist Serge Charchoune, called 'The Exhibition is Open', which will be shown at the Talbot



Merlin James

Rice Gallery in the Old College until 16th February, 2013. His talk offered an introduction to and reassessment of Charchoune's work, considering the artist's Russian background and his relevance for the post-modern period.

Academic Activities in November

The Centre maintained a lively programme of academic activities in November, the first of which was a lecture by Dr Dmitrii Dubrovsky,



Dmitry Dubrovsky

Associate Professor and Director of the Human Rights program at the Department of Liberal Arts and Science, St. Petersburg State University. An expert in Human Rights and the phenomenon of hate speech, Dr Dubrovsky presented a paper entitled 'Art, Protest and Clash of Rights in Russia', which examined the actions by performance art groups Voina and Pussy Riot.

Dr Dubrovsky's talk preceded his participation in a research study day on Linguistic Violence. The workshop was also attended by scholars from Södertörn University and Queen Mary, University of London as well as Edinburgh University and

the Dashkova Centre. The first step in establishing a large-scale research project, the roundtable event brought together different disciplines and time periods to examine the concept of linguistic violence in Russian culture, and issues of language, resistance and performance from a variety of perspectives. Further research activities in this area are currently being planned.

Finally, on 26th November, we hosted a library Knowledge Exchange event, part of a larger visit to Scotland by a group of Russian youth library directors. The group of fourteen Russian librarians were welcomed to the Dashkova Centre after time spent at the National Library of Scotland. Talks were given by John Scally, Director of Edinburgh University Library & Collections, Andrei Lisitskii, Head of the School of Librarian Leadership and director of the Pushkin Library Foundation, and Catriona McCarthy, Assistant Director of the University's International Office.



Library Knowledge Exchange event



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