

Interview with Zulya Kamalova

“Tatar music is a part of the world music” 30 August 2008, 16:30

Australian Tatar singer Zulya Kamalova is visiting Kazan these days. A concert of the popular performer became a bright event in cultural life of Tatarstan capital. She doesn't visit our republic very often. People of different ages and musical tastes admire her creativity. The singer is to perform at a grandiose event – the festival “Creation of Peace” on August 30.

Zulya Kamalova participated in an online press-conference at Tatar-inform news agency and answered questions of journalists and her fans. Journalist Leysan Abdullina hosted the press-conference.

First of all I would like to make you a compliment. I attended your concert on August 28 at the club “Mayakovsky. Zheltaya Kofta”. I received positive emotions, felt your energy. How do you assess your performance?
Z.K.: It was great. The audience is wonderful. They welcomed us very warmly. We were very glad. Sometimes there are sound problems when performance takes place at small clubs, but it's OK. And despite the fact that we were tired, we kindled. We liked it very much.

During the concert one has a feeling that your team is like one organism. Tell us please about your musicians.
Z.K.: I have been working with this band for almost five years. I can say I'm lucky to work with such musicians. They like everything I do despite the fact they are Australians. One of them is a Greek by origin. The one who plays accordion has Irish and German roots. But they were born in Australia.

The nice thing about live music is that we play together and enjoy it. It is obvious, but many people don't understand it …

Do musicians usually accept immediately what you offer?

Z.K.: We work together. Someone brings songs (usually me) and we discuss our work. We like it. I give them plenty of freedom, but I don't let them play a lot of jazz (they are good jazz musicians). They know what I need.

You don't come to Kazan very often. This time you came to take part in the festival “Creation of Peace”. What is your opinion about the festival?

Z.K.: This festival is very extraordinary. Wide scale and high level is great, but it is wonderful that this event takes place in Kazan. When I have a chance to visit my Motherland, I always agree. I think it is great honor, taking into account I am the only one who will sing in Tatar.

Do you often visit Russia?

Z.K.: Almost every year. I come here on different occasions. If I organize a Europe tour, I always give concerts in Russia. Or, for instance, last year I received an invitation to participate in a large-scale festival dedicated to the sacred month Ramadan in Moscow.

After leaving for Australia did you dream about returning to Russia to live and perform here?

Z.K.: I had an idea to move closer to Russia, because it is hard to go through a 30-hours-long flight. It is expensive and inconvenient. And I have a child. But my parents are getting older. I want to see them more often and I want my daughter to be with them more often. So, of course, once a year is not enough.

When did you leave for Australia?

Z.K.: In 1991 – 17 years ago. So long ago … But I try to keep in touch. Certainly, now it is difficult for me to determine where I'm from.

Tell us please about your view on Australia. How many people are there in the local Tatar Diaspora?

Z.K.: First I lived in a small town. I decided not to live in the diaspora. Many people choose to be with the diaspora, because it is easier. There is a large Tatar community in Adelaide. They have their own school. I think here are 100 Tatar families there.

What language do you think in?

Z.K.: English and Russian – the languages I usually use.

When did you discover Tatar anew?

Z.K.: I discovered it when I started singing. I used to talk in Tatar with my grandmother. Now I have to remember everything. My father likes poetry, when I come to the Motherland, I read these books.

Is there difference between your fans in Kazan and Australia?

Z.K.: Of course, there is. Australians love music more. Local fans like that I sing in Tatar.

One can associate your creativity with ethnic music, right? Or do you agree with Artemiy Troitsky who evaluates your creativity as a new highly-intellectual pop-music (Tatar chanson)?

Z.K.: Artemiy Troitsky attended one of our concerts in Moscow long ago. Probably he heard our new music and his opinion may have changed now.

It is difficult to define your own music. People like labels, but I keep changing trends. There are some ethnic elements, French chanson and many other things. If someone can define it, I will be glad.

Tell us please about your new album. What ideas and thought do you want to realize in it?

Z.K.: I cannot say a lot about my new album. I spend most time with my child. I need an opportunity to focus on music. I think I will have such an opportunity when my daughter goes to a kindergarten.

Did you bring your daughter to Kazan?

Z.K.: Yes. She is with my sister. I haven't seen her for four days, I've missed her a lot. But at the same time I remembered the time when I had no children. It is such freedom. In general, I'm very happy to be a mother.

What is Tatar music for you?

Z.K.: I began working with Tatar music when I understood that it touches me. I feel it at a very deep level. This music is a part of me. Tatar music is a part of the world music. I think I will return to my native language in my songs soon.

Nina Narykova Source: www.tatar-inform.ru