

Belarusian and European Fashion in Unison

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The great fashion of Europe is mainly associated with expensive boutiques of well-known fashion designers who do credit to many European capitals. However the innovative and democratic fashion originated from the street youth clothes of the 1960s. It brought significant changes into our life and fashion as well unisex, miniskirts, the “punk” style, the “ethno” style, etc.

The last decade is mainly characterized by radical changes in the Belarusian fashion. One can see a great variety of styles in the streets of Minsk and many other cities. The youth appears to be the most active initiator of all these changes.

Today the fashion wants to play and to be ironic. One can notice a great abundance of ornaments, dcor, colours and pictures. The fashion tends to be not only more elegant but also heavier and more abrupt. Such notions as “joke” and “comfort” are also of great importance.

Nowadays the fashion is one of the leading arts that affects our lifestyles, manners, the feeling of harmony and self-confidence. It also helps to create one’s image and to achieve one’s goals. Students turn out to be the most progressive youth environment, they function as the catalyst of many changes. That’s why their democratic clothes and manners that had a shocking effect on the conservative representatives of the older generation now have become the necessary creativematerial for contemporary fashion designers.

The leading designers of the XXth century Pierre Karden, Yves Saint Laurent, Paco Rabanne, Pierre Kurrezh, Mary Kuant, etc. [Sh.Zeling “Fashion. The Designers Century”. Cologne, 2000. pp. 355-379, 393] derive their innovative ideas from these youth streets and university audiences.

The youth fashion in its most extravagant variants was brought to us by famous foreign singers and actors. It soon enjoyed great popularity in spite of all ideological barriers. Suchan atmosphere of mutual search for modern style stimulated the development of many tendencies in the Belarusian fashion of the 1960-1980s.

The Belarusian House of Fashion built in 1948 has become the basis of the Belarusian fashion development. Such prominent designers as V.V. and I.B. Bulgakov, S.M. Butirkina, S.M. Kirienko, G.I. Vdovichenko, V.N. Kupchenko, K.V. Tsarkova, N.I. Duvanova, etc. worked there in the 1960-1980s. They managed to combine our industrial opportunities with the high artistic level of the clothes designed for people of all ages, professions and aesthetic orientations. Minsk together with Moscow, St. Petersburg, Tallin, Kiev, Riga and Vilnius becomes one of the leading centres of the East-European fashion.

In 1989 the great fashion designer Pierre Karden demonstrated in Minsk his collection “haute couture” with greatly expressed romantic tendencies [E. Jazerskaja “The Colours and Lines Symphony”. LIM, July 14 1989, p. 16]. He also appreciated the work of the Belarusian designers, our development prospects and well-organized industrial base.

The Belarusian designers worked for decades considering the European fashion tendencies: constructivism, ethnostyle, classical and sports style. Minsk proved its name of the European fashion leading centre in 1993 and 1994 when Olivier Lapidus, the leading Parisian designer, demonstrated his collection “haute couture”. [G. Grinkevich. “Olivier Lapidus: My Fashion Is My Love Language With Its Charm, and Soul, and Romanticism” newspaper “Mila Plus” 3/4, 1994, p. 13; magazine “The Golden Orchid” -0/95; “Lapidus”, pp. 12-15; The Belarusian Fashion Centre (booklet). “Olivier Lapidus”. The Haute Couture Collection. Spring/Summer 1994].

No wonder such demonstrations had a favourable effect on the development of the Belarusian youth fashion. Since 1996 Minsk and Vitebsk have become the centres where the international youth fashion festivals “The White Amphora”, “The Blue Snowdrop”, “The Fashion Mill”, “Mila Plus”, “The Mammoth”, etc. are held. A number of young designers have been great success not only in our country but also abroad. They demonstrate their collections in Moscow, Paris and other European fashion capitals (N. Prischep, O. Lomako, N. Ostapenko, A. Andrejuk, Zh. Guscha, E. Zhvikova). [A. Liaukovich “Minsk and haute couture? Incredible but it’s true”, newspaper “Zvjazda”. September 3 1997].

The Belarusian fashion connects its creative plans with the youth - this inexhaustible source of new ideas. The young people of the new century are very individual and non-standardized. That’s why the task of the Belarusian fashion is to develop the feeling of taste, measure, harmonious combination of details, use of traditional and innovative tendencies. It’s high time to give up the idea to resemble foreign ideals. No clichés and the variety of individualities!