

Roma Day celebrated at Avion

(The Slovak Spectator; 15/2009; 20/04/2009; s.: 10; Zuzana Vilikovská ; Zaradenie: CULTURE)

THE INTERNATIONAL Day of the Roma fell on April 8 and a rich programme was presented in honour of the day at Bratislava's Avion Shopping Park. The event's core was performances by talented children from the **Divé maky** (Field Poppies) project, livened up by the entertainer Petra Polnišová and by the exciting Street Dance Academy of the renowned hip-hopper Laci Strike.

In the freely composed show, various kinds of entertainment were combined: "internal" performers with guests; acrobatic pieces by dance talent Igor Hunka along with guests from the Street Dance Academy; and yet another was the Latino-style performance of young, smart Robert Sendrei.

Other members of the **Divé maky** 'family' introduced their skilful fingers - violonist Paľko Kuruc playing the famous Monti's Csardas and pianist Janko Deme performing the playful Flight of the Bumblebee. Promising young poet Svetlana Harvanová recited her poetry.

The colourful mix of songs included Vráť mi tie hviezdy (Give Back Those Stars to Me) sung by Slávka Oláhová, accompanied on piano by Janko Deme and the pop songs Sway and Some People Want It All sung by conservatory student Aneta Kováčová.

And, as this event was organised to commemorate the International Day of the Roma, groups of girls sang Roma songs accompanied by the cembalo folk group Cimbalovka z Klenovca. Another part of the event included an exhibition of paintings by talented Roma artists.

The **Divé maky** project is aimed at supporting and developing talented Roma children and youths in sports, music, singing, dance, education and both fine and dramatic arts. It is an innovative pilot programme in Slovakia, offering a better future for talented children from socially-weaker Roma families.

It also seeks to undermine social prejudices against the Roma community and to support these children's rights to an education and a full-value life.

Divé maky is funded by individual donors who support the study and talent-training of a chosen child for at least one school year.

Professional tutors monitor each child's development in everyday family and school life. Children are chosen annually through talent tests. Currently, 54 children from across Slovakia are taking part in **Divé maky**, including 13 newcomers for this school year.

More information is available at www.divemaky.sk.

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Robert Sendrei and his partner at Avion. Photo: Jaroslav Repta