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Blood Brothers on Stage in Moscow

Count Krolock meets Count Krolock

By Alexander Feinberg

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Drew Sarich and Ivan Ozhogin before their Moscow concerts. **Alexander Feinberg / MT**

"Brothers" might not be the first word to come to mind when you meet Ivan Ozhogin and Drew Sarich. Ozhogin, dressed in business casual, could be mistaken for an upscale real estate agent, while Sarich in ripped jeans and Doc Martens looks like he's just had a successful day in the bargain section of a vintage record shop.

But both have performed the role of chief-vampire Count von Krolock in the musical "Dance of the Vampires." That makes them "brothers in music" — the title of two concerts they are performing in Moscow.

The musical "Dance of the Vampires" is based on a 1967 Roman Polanski film and premiered in Vienna in 1997. It tells the story of the seduction of an innkeeper's daughter by von Krolock, and her ensuing transformation into a vampire. Sarich, born in St. Louis, Missouri, now lives in Europe and has performed the leading role of Krolock in Vienna and Berlin since

2010. Ozhogin, a native of Ulyanovsk, was impressed when he travelled to Vienna to see Sarich play von Krolock. He then took on the role in a St. Petersburg production in 2011, for which he later won the prestigious Russian "Golden Mask" award.

Sarich seems born for the role of Krolock. He has been a vampire fan since childhood, and his love for the bloodthirsty undead has not dimmed. "Any chance I get to put the teeth in and bite people, I will take," he said with a deadpan expression. He praises the "Dance" for "letting itself be really, really silly," though his preparations for the role were nothing if not methodical and serious. "Any character I play has at least one if not three animal images that I use," he told The Moscow Times, "And for Krolock, I said he's part panther, part eagle, and part Elvis Presley... and Elvis Presley — he's sexy as hell."

While Sarich takes pleasure from the sensual aspects of the role, Ozhogin relishes the philosophical subtext of his character. "Written into the musical," he explains, "are ideas about the übermensch. Absolute knowledge. He understands that he is immortal." According to Ozhogin, the "Dance" is "one of the best musicals ever made, if not the best."
Sarich does not speak any Russian, though sometimes he enjoys ending his companion's sentences with a conclusive "da," and Ozhogin can only manage a few words of English. But they have no trouble communicating through music. Ozhogin describes how they "have so much in common in music. We begin a duet and haven't decided who will be the high, middle, low voice, but we start running through the song and are completely in sync."

Sarich echoed the sentiment in English. "We just seem to harmonize so instinctively," he commented. You start to get a sense of how aptly the term "brothers in music" applies to these musicians.

Sarich and Ozhogin are thrilled to be performing together for the first time, and as they talked about their rehearsal earlier in the day, it was clear that preparations were going well. They are each picking out songs that they've known from childhood or hold special meaning for them. With many similar tastes (they both love Queen and Metallica), each showed complete confidence in the other's selection and abilities, even if the final list of songs had yet to be completely ironed out. The format and freedom that the musicians were given for these concerts makes them quite personal. "It's just two guys who said 'this is what we'd like to do do'," Sarich explained, "and so we're going to do it."

Both find a certain deeper meaning in their connection and in the concerts that they are performing here. "When you look at where our countries are standing," Sarich commented, "it makes it all the more important that we are together on a stage sharing what we love."

Ozhogin also recognized the symbolism of an American and a Russian performing together. "I like to believe," he remarked, "that we all live in one big country called Earth. And music is the universal language of everyone in that world."

Ivan Ozhogin and Drew Sarich Make Music Together. Glastonberry Club. 13A 1st Dubrovskaya Ulitsa, Bldg. 1. Metro Dubrovskaya. +7 (495) 642-45-43. glastonberry.ru. Sun. 7 p.m.

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