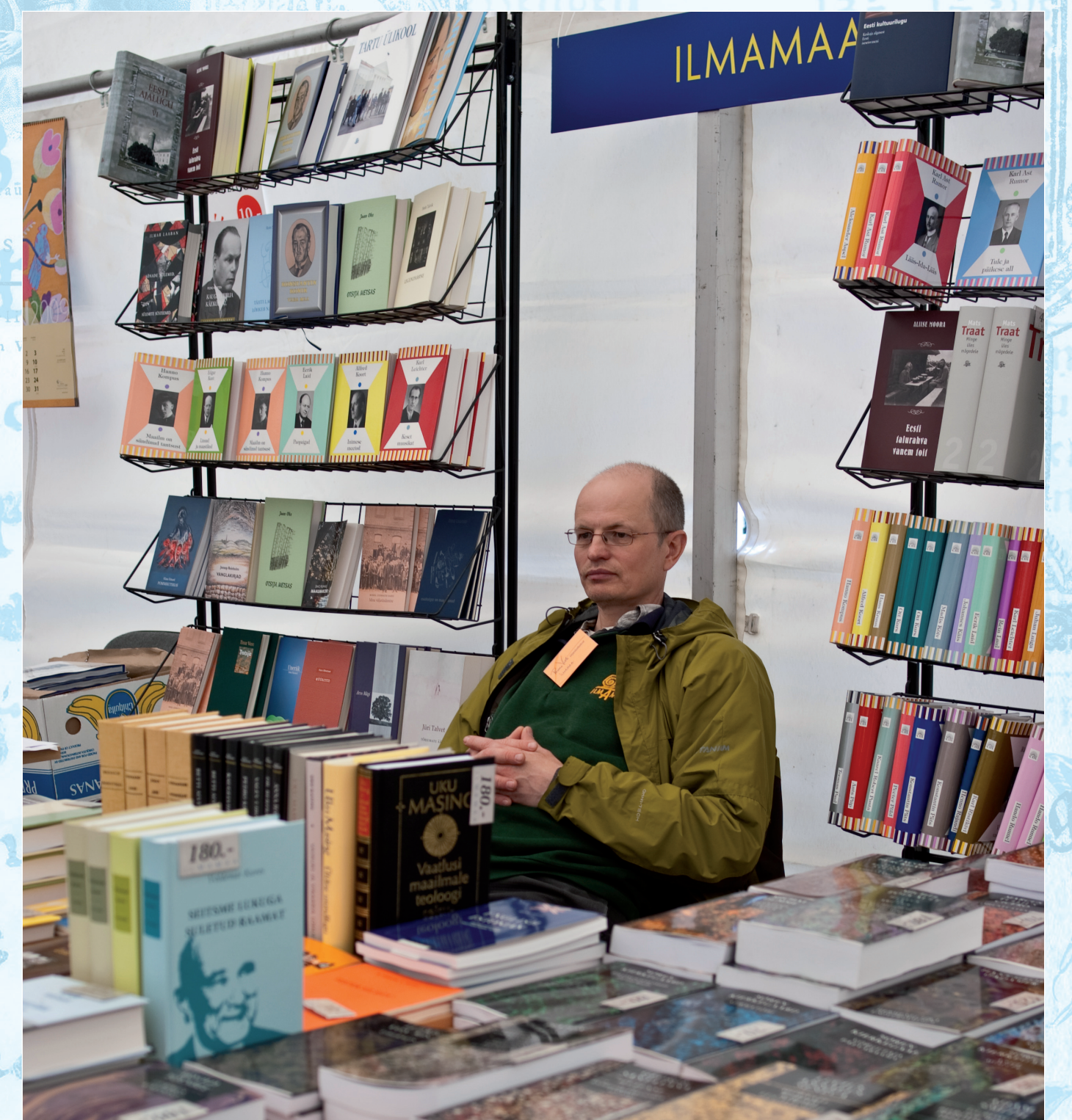


Prima Vista – the people's word festival of Tartu



The Prima Vista literary festival of Tartu was initiated in 2004 as one of the new ventures within the framework of a larger agenda for enriching the city's cultural life with major international events. The University of Tartu Library book fair Utlib Market was the launch pad for the festival and numerous local events had been organized in cooperation with Estonian Literary Society, the Tartu branch of Estonian Writers' Union and the Tartu Public Library. Prima Vista is a people's festival, open to passers-by, welcoming inquisitive minds from beyond the literati lounge. Prima Vista has been marked as one of the Festivals of Distinction for Tartu.

The University of Tartu Library is the main hub of the festival – attracting hordes of students who seek diversion from preparing for their countless exams – some of the most distinctive activities of Prima Vista have always preferred outdoor venues. The book fair sets up dozens of stalls for curious browsers in search of volumes old and new; the Tartu Public Library moves its borrowing outlets to the central park of the town and enlivens it with its own programme which includes the Singing Writers show and the night cinema. There is also the First Step award for the best literary debut in periodicals. It is always the guest performers who guarantee some proper attention from the national media. Thus, among the successes of Prima Vista there have been renowned performance poets such as Benjamin Zephaniah, John Cooper Clarke, poetic music critics from The Wire Magazine, German subversive troubadour Wolf Biermann, French Symbolist rockers Varsovie. Of course, often the university ties help along in getting authors with academic proclivities – notably the great Umberto Eco, our guest of honour at the 2009 festival.



Prima Vista has hosted performers from Germany, Spain, Hungary, Romania, Poland, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, etc – and it is always particularly enjoyable when the guests stay on to mingle with the audience. Prima Vista is the festival which each year merges together music, film, fashion, theatre, and other arts, still all around the word.

(Adapted from: Berk Vaher, Estonian Literary Magazine 1/2012)



A crucial element in Prima Vista's growth, however, has been the meticulous attention on providing events for the Russian audience and everyone interested in Russian literature – Prima Vista festival is one of the very few in Estonia to consider it a major cultural mission. The main performers in that line of activities are known for their social criticism: Lyudmila Ulitskaja, Alexandra Marinina, Dmitry Bykov, Dina Rubina, as well as Evgeniy Grishkovets and Grigory Oster who has attended Prima Vista this spring.