

# Russian gymnasts to perform here Tuesday

By BRIAN OLAFSON

Ten years of Olympic and World competition.

Thirty-seven gold medals.

Eighty-seven medals total.

This is dominance.

This is the Russian National Gymnastics Team.

True, they haven't won all the gold.

True, they haven't won every individual competition. But as a team they have been unbeatable.

On Tues., Dec. 13 at 8 p.m. a

demonstration team of thirteen of Russia's finest will put on an exhibition of competition gymnastics in the university gymnasium.

The team will consist of five men and eight women. All of the men were on the team which represented Russia at this year's world championships. Five of the women were also on this team.

Present World Champion, Mikhail Voronin, is undoubtedly the most sparkling of the male performers. At the age of 13, Voronin's career began. Eight years later (1966) he won the world crown.

The beginning is best described by Voronin himself. "As a boy I used to sneak into the Dynamo Stadium gym and try out the apparatus. One day, when I was attempting a hand stand on the rings for probably the twentieth consecutive time, trainer Vitaly Belyayev herded me and another dozen boys into the main gym. A few months later we had a trial and I passed."

"That was the somewhat unusual manner in which I was admitted to a very usual children's sports club, open to any school child in our country. As time went on, some of my mates gave up gymnastics for other pursuits. I didn't."

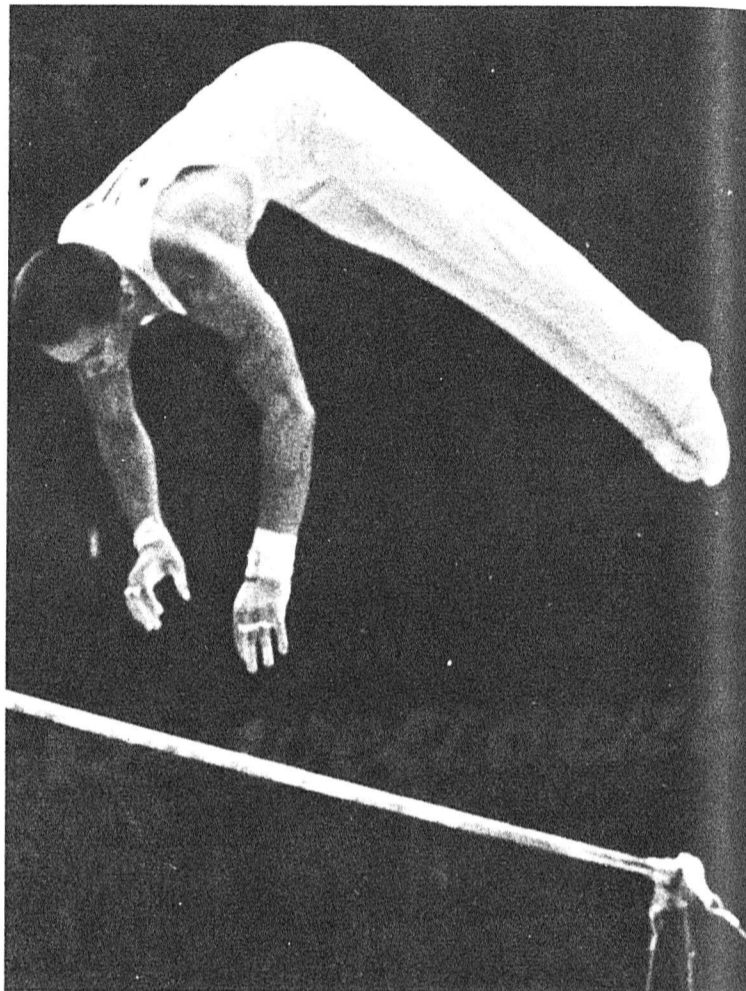
What makes a world champion gymnast? Shortly after winning the title Voronin answered with the following, "I am often asked about the secret of my success in the world championships. It is hard to answer briefly. I like the fact that gymnastics is a difficult sport and you've got to train endlessly before you learn a new trick. But this brings its own rewards. I hate being superficial. What attracts me are the deeper processes in a sportsman. This is why people probably think I am taciturn. Concentration helps me train and perform."

What he didn't mention was the three hours a day he has spent training for the past eight years. His dedication and intense competitive spirit is exemplified when he says, "I tell myself I'm going to leave out all the risky elements, but when my turn comes I forget all about it and perform everything I know. You may think it reckless. I think it realistic."

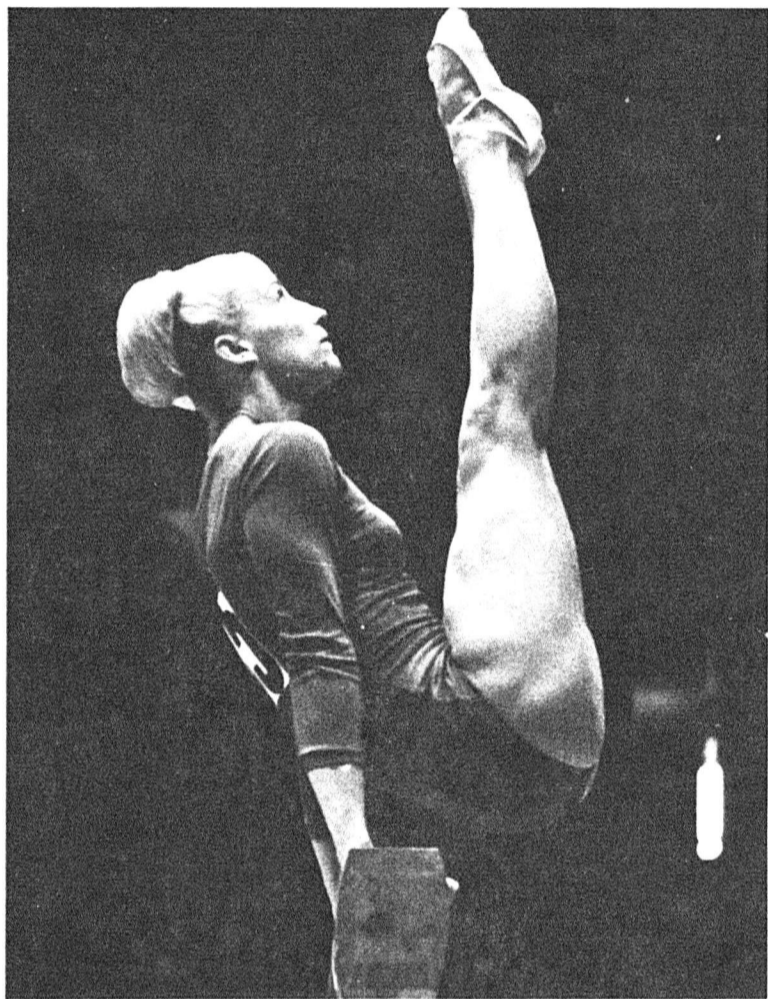
Voronin wants to be a coach. However, as he is now only twenty-one it will be many years before he steps down.

Youth reigns supreme on the present Russian team. Voronin's most dangerous rival is twenty-three year old Sergei Diomidov.

Diomidov is the present Russian all around champion. He has defeated Voronin several times in the past and although not as consistent he must never be counted out. At the world championships this year he won the gold medal on the



**WORLD CHAMPION MIKHAIL VORONIN**  
... backbone of Russian gymnastics team



**RUSSIAN GYMNAST POLINA ASTAKHOVA**  
... participant in many world meets

parallel bars. One of the most difficult tricks on the bars is known as Diomidov's wheel.

The closest rival of Diomidov and Voronin is Valerii Kerdelidi. He finished third in the Russian National Championships this year.

Ex-world champion, Yuri Titov, will also be performing with the demonstration team. Titov competed first in the 1956 Olympic games and has since won five gold and thirteen bronze and silver medals in world competition. At thirty-one he adds to the team that stability which can only be acquired through experience.

Last but not least amongst the men is Boris Shaklin. Shaklin, born in 1932, has been a member of the Russian National Team since 1954. He is noted for his perfect execution and is a master of the side horse. In his twelve years of world competition he has won twelve gold and thirteen silver and bronze medals.

The women who will be appearing are Natalia Kuchinskaya, Polina Astakhova, Larisa Petrik, Zinaida Druzhinina, Olga Kharleva, Ludmila Surmeneva, Valeri Karayev, and Tatyana Kitlarova. Of these, all but the last three represented Russia at this year's world championships.

Natalia Kuchinskaya, at seventeen, is already an astonishingly accomplished gymnast. This year,

at the world championships, she placed a close second to the Olympic champion, Vera Caslavskva of Czechoslovakia.

Natalia made her big-time debut at the Olympic games in Tokyo in 1964. At fifteen she had qualified for a place on the National Team. Although unsuccessful at Tokyo she has since shown the form which will undoubtedly make her world champion.

Larisa Petrik, 17, is this year's Russian National Champion. Along with Zinaida Druzhinina, nineteen, she has joined Natalia to form the backbone of the women's National Team.

Providing the experience of many world meets is Polina Astakhova. She placed second in this year's National Championship and at twenty-six has won twelve medals, two of which were gold. Polina is recognized as one of the all time greats in women's gymnastics.

In the past many of the visiting Russian "National" teams have proved to consist of something less than their best. Such is not the case with the gymnastic team. The people appearing here on Tuesday are the best in Russia and as a group the best in the world.

All tickets are priced at \$2.00 and are available at the Main Physical Education Office, The Bay, Mikes and Hub Cigar Store.

## The Theosophical Society In Canada

### ESSAY COMPETITION

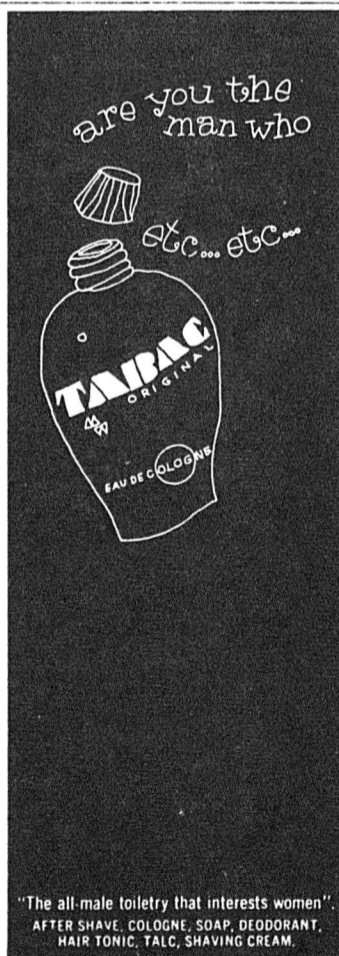
"The Value Of A Comparative Study Of Religions"

FIRST PRIZE \$250.00 SECOND PRIZE \$100.00 THIRD PRIZE \$50.00

Closing date for all entries: March 31, 1967

#### RULES

1. The competition is open to all. It is not necessary to be a member of the Theosophical Society in order to enter.
2. Entries will be judged by a panel of readers to be appointed by the Theosophical Society in Canada. Decision of the judges is final and irrevocable.
3. All entries must be typed double-spaced, on one side of the paper only.
4. The preferred length of the essay is between 2,500 and 4,000 words.
5. All entries must be original, unpublished work.
6. Each entrant must put a pseudonym on his manuscript, and with his entry enclose a sealed envelope which has his full name and address inside and the pseudonym on the outside.
7. All entries should be addressed to The Theosophical Society in Canada, 52 Isabella Street, Toronto 5, Ontario, Canada, and be clearly marked "Essay Competition". Manuscripts not selected will be returned only if requested.
8. The winning essay will be published in the September-October, 1967 issue of *The Canadian Theosophist*.



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