

## Baton Twirling in Russia Flourishes with Winnipegger's Influence

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University of Manitoba student Yonatan Orlov is a baton twirler who represents Canada on the International stage. He competed at the International Cup and Grand Prix competition this past August in Limoges, France, and placed 5th place in Senior Men's Elite 2-Baton and 3-Baton, 10th in Senior Men's Elite Artistic Twirl and 8th place Elite Team.

Last month, Orlov traveled to Moscow, Russia to share his passion for baton twirling with athletes of varying skill levels. He coached athletes from local clubs and offered Master Classes for the Russian Federation. Only a few years ago, baton twirling was introduced to this country, and since then, the sport has exploded. "Many athletes come from a dance and gymnastics background and are very dedicated," Yonatan's mother, Olga Orlov observes.

Yonatan says, "there are many things that make so many people fall in love with the sport of baton twirling. Personally, I fell in love with this sport because of the ability to display baton handling with dance and gymnastics. I have been a fan of gymnastics for many years and having the opportunity to incorporate



both gymnastics/dance and baton is the best of both worlds."

"It is a great privilege to be able to promote the sport of baton twirling in Russia," he says, adding that "baton twirling allows individuals of all ages, genders, heights, weight, and many other facts feel like they belong to a second family full of individuals with the same passion and drive."

Orlov spent long days sharing his skills with his eager students, as Russia does not have highly proficient baton twirling coaches and they must rely on coaches from other countries for this training. Their equipment is very basic so he brought donated batons he collected from the Manitoba baton twirling community.

Orlov is a student in the Faculty of Science at the University of Manitoba, and plans on competing at the World Baton Twirling competition next summer in Riccione, Italy. As for balancing his studies with training he says, "baton twirling provides a foundation for an individual to develop their time management as many hours must be put to perfect this magnificent sport."

Orlov continues to coach Russian athletes via video link and hopes to visit Russia again in the new year.