



Realizing a Long-Held Goal



■ In a coup for art lovers of the Southwest, Art History Professor Victor Koshkin-Youritzin brought to the University of Oklahoma's Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art the works of his distant relative, the Russian-American master Pavel Tchelitchew, one of the 20th century's greatest painters and ballet stage designers.

For each of 45 days during the waning weeks of winter 2002, an average of 135 art lovers stood in awe and contemplation before *Hide-and-Seek*, the enigmatic masterpiece of the Russian-American artist Pavel Tchelitchew (1898-1957). The total attendance of more than 6,000 was just one indication of the importance of the 29-piece exhibition, mounted by the University of Oklahoma's Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art and curated by OU David Ross Boyd Professor of Art History Victor Koshkin-Youritzin, who also authored its fully illustrated, 72-page catalogue.

Perhaps the musing visitors were entertaining thoughts similar to those a very young Youritzin experienced when he first saw this intriguing canvas. "I have always loved *Hide-and-Seek*," Youritzin explains, "even as a child, and for many years have thought about doing a Tchelitchew show. I finally decided to contact The Museum of Modern Art in

the summer of 1999 to ask if they would consider loaning *Hide-and-Seek*."

The prestigious museum's agreement to send Tchelitchew's most famous painting to Norman, along with 20 of his other works, is an amazing accomplishment for Youritzin and FJMA, due to the significance of *Hide-and-Seek* and its fragile condition. Indeed most of the paintings and drawings exhibited seldom leave the East Coast.

Youritzin's childhood fascination with this remarkable painting and its artist deepened when, as an adult, he learned that he had a distant family relationship to Tchelitchew. Organizing the exhibition and producing the narrative for the catalogue, which contains all the works from the show as well as other examples of the Russian-born artist's work, some never before published, became for Youritzin both a professional and a personal mission.

—CJB