

## CONVENTION COUNTDOWN

## The two towers



**A**s a schoolboy in Birmingham, England, in the early 1900s, J.R.R. Tolkien lived within sight of two towers: Perrott's Folly (above), a moodily mysterious edifice built in 1758, perhaps as a hunting lodge, and the nearby Edgbaston Waterworks.

Tolkien went on to write the epic trilogy *The Lord of the Rings*, whose second volume is *The Two Towers*. Visitors to Birmingham will find numerous points of interest related to Tolkien's life and works, which include *The Hobbit*. Brochures detailing the "Tolkien Trail" are available at the Birmingham Central Library.

Tolkien stated that the fictional Shire, home of his hobbits, was modeled after Sarehole village, where he lived as a child. The Sarehole Mill, now a museum, today sits within the Birmingham city limits. Nearby Moseley Bog, now a nature reserve, was the inspiration for Tolkien's Old Forest, which the hobbits Frodo, Sam, Merry, and Pippin traverse at the start of their journey.

For more information, visit [www.birmingham.gov.uk/tolkien.bcc](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/tolkien.bcc).



Among the talented young musicians in Moscow were (clockwise from top left) first-place winner Martín García, second-place winner Ruslan Shainazarov, third-place winner Dmitry Tyurin, and fourth-place winner Sarah Zajtmann.

## COMPETITION IN MOSCOW

## Getting in tune with young talent

**E**leven-year-old pianist Martín García, of Gijón, Spain, won first place and a scholarship worth US\$3,000 at the sixth International Russian Rotary Children's Music Competition in Moscow last March. Musicians ages 8 to 12 are eligible for the competition, which is organized by the Rotary Club of Moscow International. Since 2002, the contest has grown from a national event, with contestants chosen by each of Russia's Rotary clubs, to an international one that is part of the European Union of Music Competitions for Youth. Rotary clubs nominate young musicians by submitting a video or DVD of their performances, and the semifinalists are invited to Moscow. In 2008, clubs in 24 countries took part, and 31 scholarships were awarded. Find information about this year's event at [www.rcmc-moscow.com](http://www.rcmc-moscow.com). — ALINA DAIN

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT



I find television very educational. Every time someone switches it on, I go into another room and read a good book.

■ GROUCHO MARX, comedian and actor, 1895-1977