

Music

Riveting Russian Programme

The Pharos Trust showcased two top Cypriot artists on Wednesday night at the Castelletissa Hall in Nicosia with a recital by soprano Margarita Elia and pianist Manolis Neophytou as part of the Cyprus Artists Series.

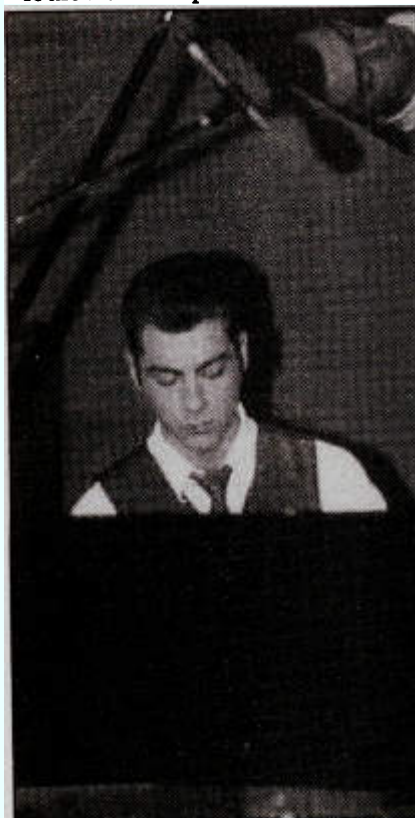
The programme was dedicated to Russian music – a combination of piano music and songs by Tchaikovsky, Balakirev, Vlasov, Rachmaninov and the young contemporary Russian composer Prokudin.

Both Elia and Neophytou are well trained musicians with numerous degrees from Hungary and Russia respectively and in this concert, showed their deep affinity and emotional involvement in Russian music.

The programme began with Tchaikovsky songs – the entire programme was sung in Russian and although it was not necessary to understand the words to appreciate the music. Elia's diction as usual, was exemplary. The extensive programme notes written by founder of the series, Yvonne Georgiadou were most helpful in understanding the origins of nationalism and the Russian song, as were the translations of each song.

Throughout the programme, Elia was vocally spectacular. She has a powerful and agile voice, with her crystalline high notes skilfully placed and yet always retaining a clear sense of tasteful phrasing and expression. Her phrasing was always lyrical and through a wide dynamic range, portrayed a deep range of emotions. Vlasov's *The Fountains of the Bachtchisarai Palace* was particularly stirring as was Rachmaninov's *Spring Waters*.

Manolis Neophytou showed that there is an art to being an accomplished accompanist. He gave a perfect balance, ever-present without overpowering Elia and always mirrored her line and phrasing in perfect harmony. In his solo works which included his own arrangement of Rachmaninov's *Piano Concerto No 3 in d minor*, he explored the full tonal range and qualities of the piano with expansive chords and yet always allowing the top, melodic notes to permeate. Zealous



Pianist Manolis Neophytou

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playing with a unified drive to the music!
We have top musicians and composers of whom we can be truly proud – they simply need a platform to showcase their talent. Too many Cypriots have had to obtain recognition abroad before being acknowledged in their own. Thank you to the Pharos Trust for this concert.

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