

Look mum, four hands!

THE PHAROS Arts Foundation presents pianists Alessio Bax and Lucille Chung, who as part of their summer European tour will visit Cyprus for a one piano, four-hand recital on Wednesday.

Composers and performers alike have long recognised the unique appeal of four-hand duets. The history of the piano duet is as old as that of the piano solo and almost as rich. It was Mozart and his sister Nannerl, who popularised four-hand playing with their European tours of the 1760s. In the 19th century, piano duets were a family pastime - either four hands on one keyboard or (in homes that could afford such luxuries) two pianists at two pianos.

One piano, four hands – that's how acclaimed musicians Bax and Chung share their music. With piano central to both their lives, it's no wonder they spend time playing in concert together. Partners in life and art, the two young musicians have arguably led to one of the best piano duos of their generation.

A musical love story, Bax and Chung first met at the 1997 Hamamatsu Competition. In 2003, the Ottawa Chamber Music Festival had the brilliant idea to put them together as a piano duo at the National Arts Centre for their Piano Extravaganza, where their performance was hailed as "a lucid and deeply moving musical experience" (*American Record Guide*).

The Montreal-born pianist, Chung has shared the stage as a soloist with orchestras around the world, like L'Orchestre symphonique de Montréal,

with which she debuted at the age of ten. An award-winning performer who includes the Stravinsky International Piano Competition among her successes, Chung's recitals have been heard by audiences in more than 30 countries.

Born in Bari, Italy, Bax won the the Hamamatsu International Piano Competition in Japan when he was 19 as well as the Leeds International Piano-forte Competition in 2000. In 2009, he was awarded an Avery Fisher Career Grant. With a wide concerto repertoire, he has been a soloist with more than 80 noted orchestras including the London Philharmonic, Royal Philharmonic, Royal Scottish National, Dallas Symphony, Rome Symphony and the Tokyo Symphony. While the couple has made recordings together, Bax also has half a dozen discs to his own credit.

In great demand as soloists, they regularly depart from their substantial solo careers to perform the four-hands and two-piano repertoire. Duo piano is a balancing act, and while the fiery Chung and the less demonstrative and more reflective Bax may have more to balance than most, that's part of their appeal.

With a repertoire ranging from Mozart to the complete works of Ligeti, Bax and Chung's concerts are a combination and understanding of individual musical talents. Wednesday evening's concert will feature all styles of classical music in a programme spanning well over 200 years.

It will include intimate waltzes by





Brahms and a special treat, Stravinsky's four-hand version of his ballet *Petrushka*. To perk up the crowds, a selection of four to five tangos by the Argentinean master *Ástor Piazzolla* have been arranged for a piano duet by Bax and Chung. A foreground quality of the dance is - brace yourself - sexiness and these arrangements, are as hot blooded and passionate as music gets. Make sure you book your

seats in advance, as seating is limited.

Alessio Bax & Lucille Chung

Pharos Arts Foundation presents a piano recital for four hands, featuring award-winning duo. June 29. The Shoe Factory, 304 Ermou, Nicosia. 8.30pm. €22/17. Tel: 70-00 9304 / 22-663871 www.pharostickets.org www.pharosartsfoundation.org

By Ledha Socratous

