

# Marvellous Matan

Acclaimed Israeli pianist returns to Cyprus for a performance in Nicosia next month

**M**atan Porat's artistic activity encompasses a wide spectrum, both as pianist and composer. Highly acclaimed and extremely popular with the audience in last year's Pharos International Chamber Music Festival in Kouklia, the young Israeli returns to Cyprus for a concert at The Shoe Factory on Friday, March 1.

Few musicians can claim to have such a successful career in both performance and composition. Porat's career as a pianist was unusual in that he only began formal piano lessons with Emanuel Krasovsky when enrolled at the Tel-Aviv University. Here he began by studying composition but after playing for Maria Joao Pires at a master-class in Paris, was invited to follow her to her farm in Belgais, Portugal as a personal pupil. As he says: "This was an intense period of artistic exchange with not only playing for her, but interacting with four hand playing sessions."

Porat never leaves his composition to one side, as it holds equal importance for him and during this time he composed several works for children's choirs. After attaining his Master's degree from Juilliard, he continued his piano studies with Murray Periaha in London and composition with George Benjamin.

Inevitably, having two parallel careers is difficult. "It's challenging to divide my time between the two passions. I do a lot of solo piano work as well as chamber music and am fortunate to have quite a good handful of commissions," Porat admits.

Porat's works have been commissioned by Maria Joao Pires, Kim Kashkashian, Elena Bashkurova and his Lux Eterna on David Orlowsky's CD won the ECHO award in 2011. His oeuvre also includes an opera, Animal Farm, a Requiem, a mandolin concerto and a musical theatre trilogy for an actor and ensemble based on stories by Kafka, Orwell and Thomas Mann.

He doesn't like to perform his own works and instead likes to think about his recitals in a creative way. He prefers to avoid the traditional, concert setting and instead wants the audience's journey to be spontaneous. "When the audience trusts and follows the performer, similar to that of a rock concert, the momentum is built up by the performance rather than the programmed schedule."

This is definitely the case with his recital at The Shoe Factory. "In this great setting of The Shoe Factory, I'm looking forward to something I think is rather different. It will be a musical journey based on Scarlatti's Sonata in d minor K32. I then create variations on it, by playing similar pieces by other composers from Couperin, Janacek, Mendelssohn, Grieg, Bartok, Brahms, Chopin, Schumann, Boulez, Satie, Debussy Bach and even some Porat! There is a huge spectrum of possibilities and this happens by relating Scarlatti and each of the proceeding pieces by motifs or characteristics, rather than by trying to create stylistic coherence."

Porat has travelled all over the world but believes that Berlin offers him the ideal environment. "It's exciting, and vibrant, reminiscent of the atmosphere of Paris of the 1920's but has not become overbearing like New York or London."

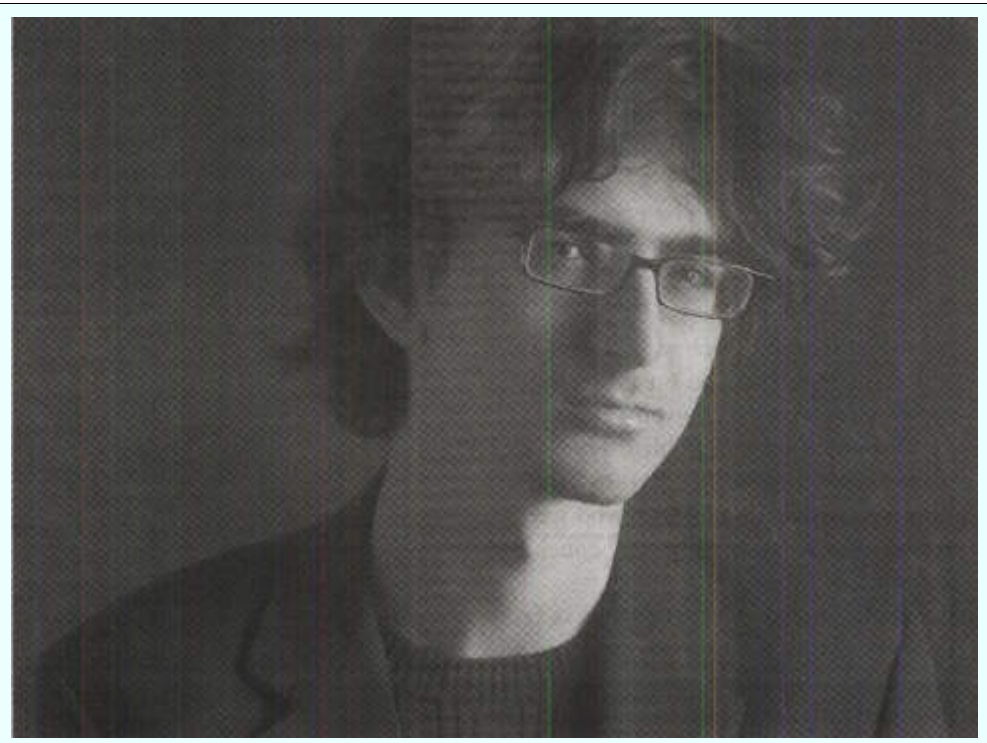
However, he still loves to return 'home' to Israel. Combining work and pleasure, as an avid chamber musician, Porat has participated in many distinguished festivals and is regularly at the Jerusalem International Chamber Music Festival amongst others including Marlboro, Verbier, Salzburg and Delft.

This is a recital not to be missed – his genius as a performer is sure to leave audiences enriched. Limited seating makes booking essential. Book online [www.pharostickets.org](http://www.pharostickets.org) or call 70009304 between 9.30am and 11.30am.

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