

Sergei Babayan's musical vision

The Pharos Arts Foundation presents multi-award-winning Armenian pianist Sergei Babayan in a solo concert on Tuesday. A student of such legendary teachers and musicians as Gornostayeva, Naumov, Pletnev and Vlasenko at the Moscow Conservatoire, Babayan was one of the first pianists of the former Soviet Union to compete without government sponsorship after communism fell. Free of government constraints, he immediately began to snag top prizes in international competitions, including Cleveland's Casadesus International Piano Competition (predecessor to the Cleveland International Piano Competition) in 1990.

Since then he has had major engagements and concert tours throughout Europe and the USA. His New York recitals at Carnegie Hall and Alice Tully Hall, and performances with the Cleveland Orchestra, the Baltimore Symphony and the Detroit Symphony, were met with huge critical acclaim, as were his numerous subsequent recital and concert performances throughout the US. In 1996, Babayan founded the Sergei Babayan International Piano Academy at the Cleveland Institute of Music, where he is also an Artist-in-Residence.

His unusual and imaginative recital programming has always elicited interest and praise. Babayan is an enthusiastic advocate of new music and his repertoire is vast. Always in search of the new, Babayan has studied conducting in order to deepen his understanding of the orchestra and to be able to study and perform music of the 20th century which is of particular interest to him.

The upcoming recital at the Shoe factory in Nicosia continues the Pharos Arts Foundation's Concert and Recital Series and will illustrate Babayan's keen understanding of programming. It begins with Vladimir Ryabov's 25 minute *Fantasia in c minor Op 21 in memory of Maria Yudina*, a great opportunity to hear the Cyprus premiere of this work.

This will be followed by Messiaen's *Première communion de la Vierge* from *Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus* and Bach's *Klavierbüchlein für Wilhelm Friedemann Bach*. Written for Bach's eldest son Wilhelm Friedemann, it is a collection of keyboard music which he began compiling in 1720. Most of the pieces included are better known as parts of the Well-Tempered Clavier and the Inventions and Sinfonias.

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A perfect end to the recital will surely be the collection of Preludes and Etude Tableau's of Rachmaninov, the last great voice of the Russian romantic tradition and a master of melody and aristocratic piano writing. His first piano works were successful with the preludes illustrating Rachmaninov's refined writing and the etudes marking the end of an era, not only for the composer but also for Russian music.

Sergei Babayan

The Pharos Arts Foundation presents recital by internationally-acclaimed pianist. October 16. The Shoe Factory, 304 Ermou Street, Nicosia. 8.30pm. €20/25. Tel: 22-663871/70-009304 www.pharostickets.org

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