

Tigran at The Shoe Factory

The Pharos Arts Foundation will continue their Jazz Series with the Tigran Hamasyan trio who will perform on November 23 in Nicosia

Armenian jazz pianist Tigran Hamasyan was born into a musical household and gravitated to the piano instead of stuffed toys even when he was just a toddler. By three, he was exploring the songs of the Beatles, Louis Armstrong, Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple and Queen.

“I can say that my jazz predilection was influenced by Miles Davis’ fusion period and by ten, when my family moved to Yerevan, I discovered the classic jazz songbook with my

teacher Vahag Hayrapetyan, himself a student of Barry Harris.”

But it was classical music which Tigran studied while simultaneously developing himself as a jazz pianist. In 1998, his performance at the First International Jazz Festival in Yerevan opened other doors and opportunities to perform and led to his meeting with promoter Stephane Kochoyan who booked him for several European festivals.

When the family moved to Los Angeles, Tigran was sixteen. He partook in compe-

titions and won top prize at the prestigious Thelonious Monk International Jazz Piano Competition and second place in the 2006 Martial Solal International Piano Competition in Paris.

Tigran has recorded a new CD, *A Fable* – a dynamic solo piano collection with which he continues to make giant strides in the jazz world.

Inspired by his homeland, Hamasyan’s songs and inventive arrangements move from gracefully refined pieces to

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energetic experiments with rhythmic and harmonic diversity as well music inspired by the poetry of Hovhannes Tumunyan and Gegham Saryan.

“The album was recorded and came to me because all of the compositions tell a story. I think that people relate to fables as they are simple, and yet profound. It was time for me to do a solo recording as the previous three had featured a full band,” explains Hamasyan.

The repertoire is personal compositions as well as arrangements of other composer’s pieces.

“The title track, I wrote in Armenia about six years ago – it was inspired by Armenian folk tales as well as fables written by mediaeval Armenian fabulists such as Vardan Aygektsi and Mkhitar Gosh.

Finally it’s down...” he smiles.

Although a solo recording, Tigran enlisted the help of his drummer and long-time band mate Nate Wood to record, mix and master the album.

“Although it is a simple idea to perform alone in a room with an acoustic piano, it has been one of the most challenging ways to express myself musically. You can’t rely on anyone else – it’s just you and the piano. But, strangely the freedom of performing alone is deeply inspiring.”

Tigran’s love of poetry inspired two pieces – Longing by Hovhannes Tumunyan who wrote about exiled Armenians in the late 19th and 20 century and Legend of the Moon

based on Gegham Saryan’s poem that was a favourite of Tigran’s since childhood.

Tigran is an artist who is free, creative and courageous in pursuing his own musical vision – head down to The Shoe Factory on November 23 – you won’t be sorry.

BIG COMPETITION

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