

REVIEW

Grigory Sokolov, March 10, PASYDY Auditorium, Nicosia

Sizzling, scintillating Sokolov

The recital of Russian pianist, Grigory Sokolov began 35 minutes late with profuse apologies from Garo Keheyan, President of the Pharos Trust explaining that just half an hour before the concert, one of the hammers of the piano was faulty.

President of the Steinway Club Cyprus, Stavros Kyriakides was on-hand immediately to assist, and temporarily rectified the problem allowing the concert to proceed, much to the relief of concert-goers who filled the auditorium. The intimate atmosphere of the PASYDY auditorium in Nicosia was further enhanced by the change in lighting, dimmed around pianist Sokolov.

It is well known that Grigory Sokolov likes to record his CDs from live performances and from the first notes of his French Suite No 3 in B minor BWV814 by Bach, one can understand why.

There was an electricity and tension in the air mixed with excitement and awe at this marvellous pianist. He brought out the most beautiful tonal resources from the piano, but it was his ornamentation and trills which were simply perfect. This was a lyrical and expressive interpretation of Bach, with moderate tempi and very effective phrasing.

Almost attacca with no applause by the audience. Sokolov launched into

Beethoven's Tempest Sonata, No 2 Op 31. This was one of the transitional sonatas leading to Beethoven's second period written during his progressive loss of hearing with his Op 31 most clearly showing the dissolution of the composer's earlier style and his probing for new means of expression.

Sokolov's approach to Beethoven was economical and uncompromising – there was no hint of pretence or affectation, just a deep understanding of the music. He had faster tempi than usual in the outer movements but never lost control of either technique or the music itself. The slow movement, partially influenced by the French funeral marches of the 1790s can only be described as superb.

Following the interval, Garo Keheyan had a brief minute on the stage to enlighten new audience members about the work of the Pharos Trust and his dream of putting Cyprus on the map culturally. In his words, "as Cyprus is uniquely positioned on the crossroads of Europe, Asia and Africa, the Trust draws on the island's unique heritage and location and can offer a vehicle for increased interaction and intercultural dialogue – we should be known for something apart from "the problem". The joy that the Pharos Trust has brought to so many music and art lov-

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ers, and to over 8,000 school children who have participated in their ongoing education project, is under serious threat if more sponsors are not forthcoming. Surely this would be a tragedy for the island?

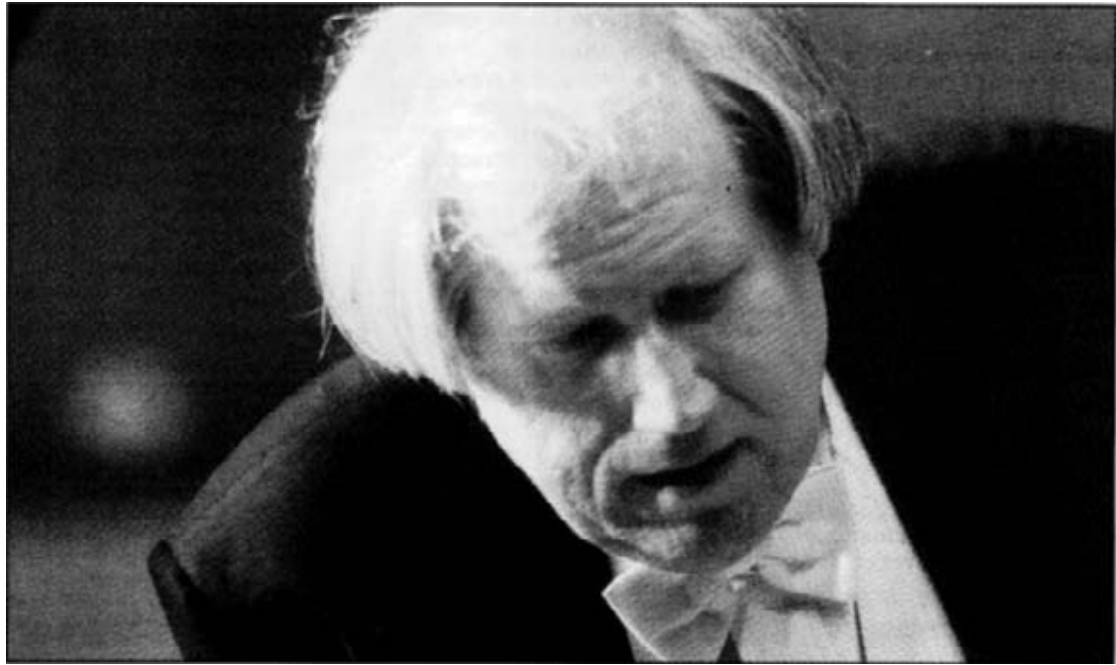
Following the interval was Schumann's Sonata in f sharp minor Op 11, aptly chosen as this is the 150th year since the death of the composer. Again in this work, Grigory Sokolov showed that he is a masterly performer. He exhibited a brilliant technique and artistic sensitivity which puts virtuosity where it belongs – at the service of great musical interpretations. His playing was clean, precise, graceful but with mo-

ments of profound intensity.

He dazzled the entire audience who were absolutely enraptured with his performance and if possible, even more so by this generous soloist who gave even more of his brilliance with his much appreciated encores. Thanks again to the Pharos Trust for bringing such a splendid artist to our shores, a true virtuoso of the ivory.

Next concert: Ensemble Modern
May 19. PASYDY Auditorium, Nicosia.
8.30pm. <http://www.thepharostrust.org> Tel :
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