

# Fantastic finale!

## REVIEW

Sixth Pharos International Chamber Music Festival, June 6, Royal Manor House

The final concert of the Sixth International Pharos Chamber Music Festival which this year took place in the Royal Manor House, Kouklia was absolutely marvellous – there just aren't enough adjectives to describe what a moving concert it was.

The programme began with Shostakovich's *Piano Trio No 2 in E minor Op 67* with Yuri

Zhislin (Violin), Alex Chaushian (Cello) and pianist Vahan Mardirosian.

It was composed as a memorial to Ivan Sollertinsky, one of Russia's leading critics and musicologists and also one of Shostakovich's dearest friends. He began composing it just four days after Sollertinsky's death and completed it on 13 August 1944. The genre of the piano trio was considered to be the musical representative of deep grief.

Tchaikovsky wrote a piano trio as a memorial on the death of Nikolai Rubinstein and Rachmaninov too, composed a trio "in memory of a great artist" on the death of Tchaikovsky.

From the first movement high har-

CYPRUS MAIL

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monics of the cello in canon with the violin, an ethereal effect was immediately created with the balance of the piano perfect on full stick, in the lower registers.

Yuri Zhislin is beautiful to listen to as well as to watch (yes, handsome too) – with a perfect stance and bow arm. Too often, we see violinists not sitting correctly, so naturally the sound production suffers. Yuri Zhislin is a prodigious talent, with not only technical prowess exhibiting precision, confidence and command but also with formidable musical insight. He had exquisite linear beauty in his phrasing but with dramatic valediction and nostalgia creating a charged atmosphere.

Alex Chaushian too faced the audience making these three young musicians create an almost orchestral effect. Attention was paid to the details of rhythm, accent, colour and style evoking intense and profound feelings. The second movement was aptly frenzied

with the *szorzandi* highly effective and driven forward by the pianist. The cello part is often written in the very high registers but Alex Chaushian always had perfect intonation, moving his left hand fingers closer as required on the fingerboard.

The scale passages were flawlessly executed by the strings and also by Armenian pianist Vahan Mardirossian who didn't hide behind sustained pedalling.

The Largo had no vibrato in the opening phrases and was stark portraying the utter anguish of the composer with seamless bow changes from both Zhislin and Chaushian.

Following the interval was Schumann's *Piano Quartet in E flat major Op 47* and included violist Alexander Zemtsov. Suffice it to say that the Andante Cantabile – a simple





love-song, was so beautifully, perfectly, and passionately played that it brought tears to my eyes.

The evening was brought to an end by an impromptu improvisation by Yuri Zhislin and Vahan Mardirossian on *Autumn Leaves* again flaw-

lessly and beautifully played with plenty of verve bringing an end to this Sixth Pharos Chamber Music Festival where we were privy to the music-making of some of the finest musicians in the world.

All parents (especially those from Paphos) should have given their children the opportunity to broaden their horizons by bringing them to at least one of the concerts – it's easier than travelling the world to hear them! I won't even ask where the music teachers were.

Bravo to the Pharos Trust team who put together a splendidly organised festival – the country is enriched by your work and efforts.

*By Saskia Constantinou*



Clockwise from top left: Vahan Mardirossian, Alex Chaushian, Alexander Zemstov and Yuri Zhislin

