

Budapest Spring Festival – 2007 Chamber evenings

Chamber music has always been a strength of the Budapest Spring Festival and 2007 will be no exception. Every day has something special to offer for lovers of this most intimate genre. On some days there are even several concerts, with such musicians as Maxim Vengerov, Zoltán Kocsis, Dmitri Bashkirov, the Bartók Quartet and Miklós Perényi, to mention only a few.

Quartets

The series begins on March 17th with the St. Lawrence Quartet of Canada who first made a name for themselves in the 1990s and have been highly successful ever since: their programme features quartets by Haydn, Bartók and Franck. Haydn and Bartók are also on the programme of the concert to be given on March 28th by the Bartók Quartet celebrating their 50th anniversary in 2007, but in place of Franck they have chosen Schumann's Piano Quintet in E flat major. They are joined for the quintet by no less an artist than Zoltán Kocsis. There will be another meeting of string quartet and piano again on the following day, March 28th: together with string quartets by Haydn, Mendelssohn and Kurtág, the Kodály Quartet have chosen the Brahms Piano Quintet in F minor for which they will be joined by Jeremy Menuhin, son of the legendary violinist. The excellent Belgian Danel Quartet will play Bartók's String Quartet No. 5 and will be joined by cellist István Metz for Schubert's C major quintet. A special attraction of the concert on March 25th is that István Metz, internationally renowned as an interpreter of Kurtág, will play Kurtág pieces for solo cello.

Trios

The 2007 festival could even be called a festival of trios and duos: there will be no fewer than five trio and eight duo evenings in the space of just over two weeks. On March 18th violinist Gyula Stuller, cellist Miklós Perényi and pianist Imre Rohmann will play classical trios by Haydn, Mendelssohn and Dvořák. On March 20th the Hungarian Piano Trio have a real curiosity for lovers of romantic music: the concert presenting their "World Premier Recording" of trios by Christian Palmer (1811-1875) revives forgotten 19th century chamber music. There will be another exciting evening on March 26th when the Gerencsér Cimbalom Trio perform Bach's monumental Goldberg Variations on three cimbaloms rather than the usual harpsichord or piano! On the following day Miklós Szenthelyi (violin), Judit Faludi (cello) and Gyula Kiss (piano) will give a chamber concert in what is perhaps the country's most beautiful concert hall, the Mirror Hall of Festetics Palace: they have chosen Beethoven's opus 97 trio dedicated to Archduke Rudolph and chamber works by Kodály. The Hungarian Piano Trio will also give a concert in the Festetics Palace on March 31st. (Members: Édua Amarilla Zádory violin, Tamás Varga solo cellist of the Vienna Philharmonic, and Balázs Szokolay pianist.) They will perform French compositions: two late Debussy sonatas, Gabriel Fauré's rarely heard D minor trio and Maurice Ravel's likewise less familiar A minor trio.

Duos

The festival programme includes the youngest talents as well as the greatest international stars. On March 19th there will be a performance by the flute and piano duo of Noémi Gyóri and Nóra Füzi who attracted attention at last year's Fringe Festival. On March 24th violinist Vilmos Szabadi accompanied by Zsuzsanna Homor will introduce the public to the oeuvre of Ferenc Vecsey with a programme composed entirely of works by Vecsey. The following day there will be a performance in the Thália Theatre by an unusual piano-dance duo: Tamás Vásáry and Henriett Tunyogi. The two outstanding artists have already enchanted the public many times before and are certain to work their magic again. Perhaps the most important (and most joyful) event of the festival will be the return of Maxim Vengerov to Budapest: last year he drove the audience to a frenzy with Beethoven's violin concerto; this year he will perform sonatas by Mozart and Beethoven and compositions by Prokofiev and Shostakovich. Two more great duo evenings will be held on the final days of the festival: the Duo KlaviArt appears on March 30th with some of the greatest works ever composed for two pianos and four hands; they amazed the professional jury and the public at last year's Fringe festival. On April 1st festival-goers can hear the Katona Twins guitar duo who appeared with enormous success in Carnegie Hall. Their programme evokes the music of two cities: Buenos Aires represented by Piazzolla and Venice by Vivaldi.

Solo

There are three solo piano recitals in the programme of the 2007 Spring Festival. Tihamér Hlavacsek, a young pianist who has won a number of concert prizes, has chosen exclusively works by Liszt for his concert on March 21st. Two days later, on March 23rd, the latest prodigy from Moldavia, 20-year-old Maria Sumareva will draw on a wide range of piano music, from Bach through Schumann and Scriabin to Bartók. On March 26th our guest will be a real "grand old man", Dmitri Bashkirov, one of the last representatives of the legendary Russian piano school. The famous teacher is bringing works by Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt and Rachmaninov and no doubt we will be able to learn a lot from him.

The Amadinda Percussion Group are regular guests at the Spring Festival. Their concert will be held in the Academy of Music on March 24th. On the same evening György Vukán and the Bolero Wind Ensemble will present their latest CD in the Marble Hall of the Hungarian Radio. And one of the most exciting evenings of the festival will almost certainly be the Hubay recital to be given by three excellent singers – Andrea Meláth, András Molnár and Gábor Bretz: all the main song cycles of one of the major Hungarian composers of the early 20th century will be performed, with piano accompaniment by Emese Virág.