

## 1. CHAMBER MUSIC EXTRAVAGANZA ALIX NORMAN

Μέσο: . . . . . SUNDAY MAIL LIVING

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### The International Pharos Chamber Music Festival

May 19 to June 4. A series of concerts and educational programmes at both The Shoe Factory, Nicosia, and the Manor House, Kouklia. For full

details of the event series, visit [www.pharosarts-foundation.org](http://www.pharosarts-foundation.org) or call 22 663871. Tickets are available from the website, the box office (96 669003) and Kyriakou Fullpage Bookshops (26 822850) at a cost of €10 per performance

# Chamber music extravaganza

ALIX NORMAN

looks forward to one of the highlights of the musical calendar – the International Pharos Chamber Music Festival

**W**hen it comes to culture, this is a small island with a big presence. Perhaps the island's greatest contribution to the arts is through its music: the global 'Play Me, I'm Yours' piano project brought harmony to the streets of Nicosia; The Big Piano Project put music, literally, at the public's feet; and countless contemporary celebrations (The Loop, Fengaros, Afro Banana Republic) have caught the global eye. However, despite the island's growing musical reputation, there's nothing that compares with the original article, the most widely-known and critically acclaimed music festival of them all: the International Pharos Chamber Music Festival.

Guided by a visionary spirit and dedicated to artistic excellence, this event has been bringing chamber music to the general public for 16 years through its series of exciting programmes and performances. World-renowned soloists, talented instrumentalists and acclaimed ensembles have always gone hand in hand



with educational concerts for public school students and master-classes for young musicians in a festival that caters to both its listeners and its learners.

This year's series takes place between May 19 and June 4, and features, say organisers, "a line-up of twenty unique musicians who will join forces for eight concerts at The Shoe Factory in Nicosia and the Gothic Hall of the Royal Manor House at Kouklia, Palaipaphos. Exploring the many forms of the chamber music genre, the festival will encompass an impressive array of instrumental combinations and repertoire, ranging from Paganini and Boccherini, all the way through Mozart, Schubert and Brahms, to Shostakovich and Prokofiev, as well as a number of rarely performed masterpieces."

The Festival opens at The Shoe

Factory with a recital by the exceptional young Viennese violinist Emmanuel Tjeknavorian, who has impressed audiences worldwide with her interpretations and won both the second and special prizes at the Jean Sibelius International Violin Competition in Helsinki. Emmanuel will join forces with another rare young talent from Vienna, pianist Maximilian Kromer, presenting works by Mozart, Schubert, Franck and Kreisler. A week of intensive educational activities follows, before the Festival moves to the Royal Manor House in Kouklia, a venue which will be specifically transformed for the event into a first class recital hall fit to host the world's greatest musicians...

On the island for the first time is pianist Yuja Wang described as "simply, the most dazzlingly, uncannily gifted pianist in the



concert world today". Returning to the Festival is fellow pianist Yevgeny Sudbin - hailed as "potentially one of the greatest pianists of the 21st century", along with a number of other regular performers: distinguished cellist and artistic director of the Festival Alexander Chaushian, Concertmaster of the Berlin Philharmonic Daishin Kashimoto, the impressive violinists Boris Brovtsyn, Levon Chilingirian, Henning Kraggerud and Monika Urbonaite; violists Diemut Poppen, David Abrahamyan and Shira Majoni; cellist Tim Park; renowned double-bass player Nabil Shehata; eminent guitarist Fabio Zanon; remarkable clarinetist Alessandro Carbonare; the fascinating German pianist Katharina Treutler; and two wonderful and extremely charismatic young singers - soprano Ruzan Man-

tashyan and Cypriot baritone Markos Kleovoulou.

The Festival ends on Saturday June 4, as a number of these amazing soloists guide the Festival back to where it all started - The Shoe Factory in Nicosia - for a suitably festive finale with an exciting and wide-ranging programme of works for strings, guitar, piano and voice. For many music-lovers, this event series is the high point of the year - people fly in from all over the world to see world-class musicians playing in this exquisite Mediterranean setting. So if there's one event that's absolutely worth your time this month, this is it. On an island that's rapidly becoming the cultural capital of the eastern Mediterranean, there's still nothing that can quite compare to the excellence of the International Pharos Chamber Music Festival. Do not miss it!