

# Baroque bonanza

THE PHAROS Trust had a full house at the PASYDY Auditorium on Friday night when they brought the London Baroque and Emma Kirkby to Nicosia for a single performance.

The quartet was formed in 1978 and is regarded as one of the foremost exponents of baroque chamber music. Their repertoire spans from the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century to Mozart and Haydn. They perform on period instruments of rare and exceptional quality such as Stainer, Cappa and Julier.

The recently purchased harpsichord of the Pharos Trust was again presented in all its newfound glory for Terence Charlston to perform on.

The programme was a little unbalanced with four works by Handel, and one each by Corelli, Pasquini and Schenk. Was there nothing of JS Bach which could have been included?

The Corelli *Trio Sonata in D Op 1 No. 12* began the programme – a very lyrical reading which initially suffered ensemble difficulties but soon warmed up. The London Baroque has a good balance among the instruments and the musical-

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ity comes through strongly although there were some minor flaws with intonation. These seemed to emanate from a casual initial tuning when the violins were not in agreement.

Emma Kirkby, the soprano, studied classics at Oxford and became a school teacher. It was in 1974 when she made her London debut and specialised in Early Music. She began her programme with Handel's "Salve Regina". Her voice came over clearly in the higher registers in her traditional association with pure sound. The harpsichord passages were clearly articulated with the semiquavers very virtuosic.

Schenk's *Sonata 1 in D from Echo du Danube Op 1X* for bass viol followed. Charles Medlam and keyboardist Terence Charlston clearly have a rapport with one another and technical prowess but I was disappointed by the lack of dynamic variation and colour which could have been produced.

The *O Qualis de Coelo Sonus* by

Handel gave Emma Kirkby another opportunity to show her masterly breath control.

Terence Charlston was able to show off the Pharos harpsichord as well as his technical and musical capabilities with Pasquini's *Toccata con lo Scherzo del Cucco*. This flamboyant work with many sizzling passages showed what a superb musician he is and his personality and playing were much appreciated by the audience.

Although Emma Kirkby was indubitably the star attraction of the evening, one was disappointed to see that the sterling performance of the quartet, who played throughout the concert, was overlooked.

The next Pharos concert is the German Zehetmair String Quartet on 3 March at 8.30pm. Tel: 22-663-871 or <http://www.thepharostrust.org>

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Emma Kirkby and the London Baroque, February 3, PASYDY Auditorium, Nicosia



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