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MUSIC IS LIKE FALLING IN LOVE

Starting to play such a demanding instrument as the piano at the late age of 15, yet still becoming a top pianist? That is almost unbelievable and unachievable, yet Güray Başol somehow achieved it. He explains that playing the piano and progressing quickly was just like falling in love: inevitable

GÜRAY BAŞOL

Pianist



➤ Famous Turkish pianist Güray Başol visited Belgrade recently and performed in the city, where he received praise and met with enthusiasm both from the audience and critics alike. We talked to him about his beginnings, life, plans and impressions of Serbia.

There is a commonly held belief that one cannot become a high-class musician, especially if you are not in pop-rock music, unless you start very early. However, you only began playing at the age of 15! How can you explain your swift perfecting of the piano?

— When I was a child my father played the guitar and sang pop music. It was a great pleasure to listen to him at home, but I never thought I'd be a professional musician able to earn a living through music. I started playing the piano at the age of 15, at the Istanbul Fine Arts High School. Being a concert pianist was too difficult, because it was too late for me, so I then played the guitar. However, the piano was always attractive to me at that time, as it is nowadays. I worked really hard during my studies at high school. My teacher thought I was seeking the impossible, but now I think that I made a good choice for my life. It is really difficult to explain my progress on the piano; it is like falling in love, one cannot explain how or why it happens.

Turkey, like Serbia, is a country with a strong folk tradition and a fairly modest market for artistic music. Yet you decided to deal with a very serious style of music. How did you sway towards that field?

— We cannot consider classical music is being more serious than

folk music. If you look at the origins of classical music, you will find German or French folk themes in Beethoven's or Mozart's music. Thus we can claim that folk music forms the basis of classical music. When I choose to play the piano as an instrument, the repertoire that I can perform mostly includes pieces by classical music composers. That is why I perform this repertoire. The piano is a polyphonic instrument and we cannot find monophonic traditional music written for this instrument. You can play some transcription of popular melodies



➤ IT IS REALLY DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN MY PROGRESS ON THE PIANO; IT IS LIKE FALLING IN LOVE, ONE CANNOT EXPLAIN HOW OR WHY IT HAPPENS

on the piano, but I am not sure if that sounds original or appropriate.

After your training in Turkey you moved to France to continue your studies in Chamber Music with Nina Patarcec and Music Analysis with Jean-Dominique Pasquier. Following your time at the École Normale de Musique de Paris, you continued your studies at the National Rueil-Malmaison Conservatory for three years with Chantal Riou. How was it

for you during that period?

— When I arrived in Paris I was really shocked by the high level of the pianists. It meant that I needed to work more than I had previously imagined. I also tried to learn about music as much as I could – not only about the piano, also about music theory. For me, being a pianist is not only about playing the notes. If you have no idea what you are playing, if you don't research how this music must sound and why it must sound like that, you cannot become a pianist; you could only become a piano player, and we have lots of those

is so kind and has a very positive character. I also love Martha Argerich's style. Her interpretation is unbelievable, with such colour and so much energy! When you read the biographies of classical composers you discover that they had really difficult lives and after all those difficulties they left behind excellent compositions for humanity. It is such a pity that they didn't have the lives they deserved.

What music do you sincerely like to perform the best and do you enjoy the most; and what is your favourite previous performance?

— I love performing Chopin. It is really difficult to perform his music, but there is something really deep inside it. I think it is impossible to perform his music in a satisfying way, but you can try to interpret it in your own way. I think a real performer does not have a favourite performance; you can be happy to introduce your work to the public correctly, but for me it is impossible to perform as you desire. There is always something you can add to the work, which never ends. That is the beauty of the music and also the frightening thing about it, because you have no limits.

What are your future plans?

— I hope to visit Serbia again. It was really a great pleasure to perform in Belgrade. The audience was really warm, listened very attentively and I felt that. I will try to keep performing concerts as much as I can. I would like to communicate my music to larger audiences. In my opinion, music has no passport and no borders, so it is accessible for everybody. And art is the only weapon against terrorism, so we need to use it all the time. **D&C**