

KMA students, teachers present colorful musical kaleidoscope

ToT Festival an 'Ode to Joy' of young talents

By Cezary Owerkowicz

'Ode to Joy' is one of the most well-known melodies. This tune comes from the 9th Symphony by the Master from Bonn, Ludwig van Beethoven from the text of German poet and historian, Friedrich Schiller.

The song has such power and popularity that it is not by chance that it was unanimously chosen as the United Europe Anthem. However it is a melody with the exceptional apotheosis of joy. That day the melody was performed several times on the stage but its spirit was present on the both sides of the stage.

Saturday, May 12, was a day of music of joy for many juveniles — children, teenagers and even 'young' adult musicians from the Kuwait Music Academy as well as for their teachers, families, colleagues and followers.

Six concerts were held consecutively from 9:30 am until almost 7:00 pm presented in front of their guests showcasing their skills and achievements, making the listeners proud and happy and winning warm applause.

The 'Treasure of Talents' (ToT) Festival of Young Musicians has been performed for almost two decades; already a good tradition on stage for young talents from Kuwait.

Organized

Earlier organized by the Educational Program under the same name, the 'Treasure of Talents' over the past five years is being organized by the co-founders of Kuwait Music Academy, young Kuwaiti pianist and financier, Mme Fajer Al-Mazidi and her previous teacher, Prof Cezary Owerkowicz.

The previous ToT presentations were held at the wonderful Al-Hashemi II Hall but at the moment the event is held at the newly built Al-Shaheed Park. This year the KMA has a good opportunity to present the Kuwaiti musical talents at the very unique place, the Amricani Cultural Centre, which since 2011 has become a part of Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah. It appears to be the best place for such an idea, with the best atmosphere and ambience.

The graceful building facing the sea in Kuwait City was built in late 1930s and served as the American Hospital for Kuwaitis for decades and finally became an important cultural place with a library, workshops, lectures, concerts and — first of all museum holding many valuable exhibitions unique in the world — The Al-Sabah Collection, created by Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah and his wife, Sheikhha Hussah Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Director of the Dar and a great animator of cultural development in Kuwait.

The Collection contains 30,000 pieces of Islamic art, featured Mughal jeweled objects, highlighted Qur'ans and calligraphy, and, in one case, curated by children between 6 and 12 years. However, the objective always is to bring together objects created by different people, in different places, from different periods and highlight their shared humanity.

It is the best place for the modest event which follows the same ideas from the musical point of view. The young talents of different origin, different age, on different instruments presented music from different countries and cultures, different eras from Baroque, Classics, Romantics to international hits of the 21st Century, developing their talents and showing results of their efforts to a diverse audience. The riches of diversity combined harmony of different roots, forms and dreams like at the Mystery Garden.

At such a noble place 120 young musicians from early morning marched joyfully with more than their instruments, parents, siblings, colleagues, followed by many friends and families.

Combined

At the new Yamaha Grand Piano (thanks for the generosity of Al Dawliah Co) sat a group of small girls as the first performers of the first concert, sometimes with bigger slip-knots on their heads. They opened the curtain for the musical marathon combined with of piano, vocal, violins, cellos, flute or saxophone among others, music from different eras — Baroque, classical and romantic composers and hits of the 21st Century.

Everybody's name somehow deserved to be mentioned and everybody was awarded the KMA Certificates and Gold Medals but some of them trophies and special prizes. Even it is difficult not to mention some moving moments: girls and boys a bit bigger than violin bows or some of them climbing on the chair next to the piano playing firmly and lovely, small pupils playing together with their teachers on two violins, cellos or four hands on the piano.

During the same concert three very young ladies, Dora Safar,



A group picture of KMA students and teachers after the 5th concert and awarding ceremony.



A group photo after 2nd concert.



From left: Karol Masternak with Yameen Tareq Mohammed, winner of Chopin Prize; Essa Ramadan with his wife, also TV star, daughter Dania and KMA founders; Teji with Prof Cezary and Karol Masternak.



From left: Karol Masternak with Al Shehab sisters; Melika Raeisi with Prof Cezary. Strong team from China and Mme Inna with Selma Al Mousa.



From left: Karim Abou Al Ezz with Mme Inna Agibalova; Piotr Podemski, Agnieszka Fajga, and Gabriela Kolasinska after their performance; Nicholas Thomas with Karol Masternak and Mme Inna with Chadi Tazi.

Fatma Marafie and Dana Ramadan performed their pieces creating phenomenal romantic atmosphere, like playing with hearts not only fingers. Aside from trained vocalists such as Akansa Fernandes or Joanna Ruth, Fiona Hood after her piano performance started singing from the keyboard, like improvising, jazzy melody so well as a young, 'baby size' Elsa Fitzgerald, but tiny elegant boy, Karim Abou El Ezz surprised the audience with his strong voice delicately singing What a Wonderful World ... That was right: what a wonderful world of music is.

Winners & Masters — 'Finis coronat opus' — the end crowns the work. The Gala Concert at 5:00 pm was opened by The Winner of Special Award for Extraordinary Musical Achievements, Teji Wang. She is the winner of several top prizes of international music competitions in Kuwait and Gulf region, as a multi-instrumentalist — on piano, violin and flute. It was her farewell concert in Kuwait — she is going for higher studies in the US. It was a kind of tearful farewell involving her and people close to her (involved in the success story of her career). It was

good evidence that relations at the KMA are really like in the family. Teji presented the bravado Toccatata by Armenian composer, Aram Khachaturian. Later in the program Teji appeared with flute playing lovely Variations by Frederic Chopin together with her Master, Karol Masternak, well-known pianist and Director of KMA. Later, choreographer Mirela Bozic Jovanovic and pianist, Zarana Lazarevic appeared as guests on the dance floor with modern hit on piano-solo and surprise song with her colleague. All three ladies-guests-artists are from Serbia.

Kamaliddin Husanov is already popular in Kuwait with his virtuosic performances. He performed Cesar Espejo (1892-1988) Gypsy Dance together with another renowned (in Kuwait) Polish pianist, Piotr Podemski. Piotr also played two lovely solo works by Baroque Italian composer Domenico Scarlatti and Russian great Romantic, Pyotr Tchaikovsky. He caught the attention of the audience by great concentration on lyrical meanings of music ('thoughts and sounds'). They were followed in contrast by two ladies, well-known vocal-

ist in Kuwait from the KMA stage, soprano Elaf Al Tattan with Inna Agibalova on the piano, interpreting songs by Franz Schubert Serenade and Luigi Denza (1846-1922) funiculi, funicula. The last chords in such colorful musical kaleidoscope belonged once again to virtuosos: Kamaliddin with Mme Inna that enchanted the audience with mega-hits from Antonio Vivaldi's Winter, Johannes Brahms' Hungarian Dance and Pabla Sarasate's Gypsy Air. It is difficult to describe the enthusiasm of music lovers. It was really Ode to Joy and — to harmony.