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French trio performs in Islamabad

Ishrat Hyatt

ISLAMABAD: The Alliance Francaise organised the last concert for the year 2005 at the Serena Hotel. Sponsored by Spedidam, the performance featured the trio, 'Quark' made up of Manuel Schweizer on the piano, Gaël Rassaert on the violin and accompanied by Richard Malblanc on the clarinet. The concert was attended by a large number of music lovers and a few 'see and be seen' invitees.

The programme began with an introduction of the trio by Nabila Ahmed and the usual request to turn off mobile phones. Manuel Schweizer, while addressing the gathering, thanked them for attending the concert and said a few words about the piece they were going to start with. This introduction was given by him before each number. The first one was by Franz Schubert, written when he was only nineteen years old and was performed by Manuel and Gael. A beautiful piece of music that proves talent has no age limit.

The second number was also a duet composed by the famous French composer, Claude Debussy for piano and clarinet and here the piano played the part of the orchestra. This is also a very listenable piece and was well applauded.

Manuel then did a solo performance of another Debussy classic and this would have been even more enjoyable if some people did not keep clapping in-between the segments!

Finally the trio came on stage together with a rendition of a piece by Bela Bartok, not everyone's favourite composer because his music is rather complex but there must have been guests in the audience who enjoyed this composition too.

The last piece of music was also for a trio performance and though it was unfamiliar, it got a good reception. Composed by a Russian composer with an Armenian background, it was lively and according to Manuel it was pop music material because it sounds like it! Not to our ears, that's for sure!

To the dismay of a majority of the audience there was no encore, something which always takes place when good music is appreciated. Maybe Nabila was flustered by all the mobile phones which kept ringing throughout and she had to keep checking them or the people who

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chattered incessantly. Maybe the musicians were upset because they were continually disturbed by applause at the wrong time. Whatever the reason, it was disappointing for those who appreciate these rare performances.

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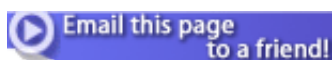
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Born in 1959, Manuel Schweizer studied in the Grenoble Conservatory; the Ecole Normale de Musique in Paris with André Gorog, and in St Petersburg's conservatory with Veronika Ivanova. Subsequently he entered the then Lyons Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique and obtained the piano Diplome National d'Etudes Superieure's Musicales in Eric Heidsiecks class. He is very involved with modern creations and teaches piano and improvisation at Chambey's National Music School.

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After working solo, he realised the need for mutual enrichment with another musician so he formed a duo with the talented violinist Gaël and their artistic and human involvement was immediate. After the success of their first concerts, the decision to continue their current work followed naturally and the trio 'Quark' was finally formed with the joining of the clarinet player, Richard.



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