



DUBROVAČKE LJETNE IGRE DUBROVNIK SUMMER FESTIVAL

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A CONCERT TO REMEMBER

A Standing Ovation for Sir Schiff

Dubrovnik, 14 July 2023 – One of the world's most renowned pianists, **András Schiff**, gave an incredible piano recital **last night, 13 July in the Rector's Palace atrium**, delighting and bringing the festival audience to their feet, gathered there for the first music program of the 74th Dubrovnik Summer Festival.

Addressing the crowd at the very beginning of the concert, András Schiff pointed out how he was honoured and grateful to have returned to Dubrovnik and the Rector's Palace after almost half a century. Although he did not play on his Bösendorfer, with which he usually travels, but on a Dubrovnik Steinway the keys of which were stroked by the virtuoso fingers of numerous pianists before him, the knighted Sir Schiff gave a memorable almost three-hour concert to the festival audience in the Rector's Palace. This experience followed in the tradition of concerts as they were a century ago, and Sir Schiff, by choosing not to announce his programme in advance, renews and nurtures the thread of tradition through which communication and connection with the audience is achieved. Without the possibility of prior preparation and listening to the compositions or reading the programme booklets, the audience is immersed in the immediate experience of the music. One of the main focuses of this passionate chamber musician are piano concertos by Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven, thus last night the works of these greats shaped the programme through which Schiff surely guided the audience, presenting each composition and telling its history. He led them into the programme with Johann Sebastian Bach's *Aria* from his *Goldberg Variations*, setting a high technical and artistic level from the very beginning with astonishing ease and brilliance of musicianship. Through every piece, movement and note, it was obvious that Schiff deeply feels and experiences the music he plays, including Bach's charming composition *Capriccio* which was next on the programme, written when the composer was only eighteen years old. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart wrote his penultimate piano *Sonata no. 17* in Vienna in 1789, from which Schiff played three movements. Then, the pianist compared and contrasted Bach's *Ricercar a tre* from the collection of canons and fugues *Musikalisches Opfer* with Mozart's *Fantasia no. 4* which is inspired by Bach's *Royal Theme* from the previously mentioned *Ricercar*, reaching new dimensions of polyphony and complexity. After *Sonata no. 52* by Franz Joseph Haydn, he played two sonatas by Ludwig van Beethoven, *Sonata no. 17* inspired by Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and the famous *Sonata no. 21*, the so-called Waldstein sonata, which bears the name of Count Waldstein, and Beethoven's friend and patron, whose passages are known as some of the best but also the most difficult in the Western classical canon. The enthusiastic audience welcomed each composition with

passionate applause, which at the very end of the evening turned into heartfelt ovations and the entire atrium rose to its feet calling the amazing pianist three times for a bow.

Sir András Schiff was born in Budapest in 1953. He studied at the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest with Prof. Pál Kadosa, György Kurtág and Ferenc Rados and with George Malcolm in London. Sir András Schiff performs with most of the internationally important orchestras and conductors. One of his main focuses is on performances of the piano concertos of Bach, Mozart and Beethoven under his direction. In 1999, he founded his own chamber orchestra, the "Cappella Andrea Barca", which he works with closely as conductor and soloist, as he does with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. Since 1998, the concert series "Omaggio a Palladio" has been held at the Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza under his direction. Sir András Schiff has been awarded several international prizes. He was recognised for his exceptional standing as a Beethoven interpreter in June 2006 by being elected an honorary member of the Beethoven-Haus Bonn. In September 2008, Sir András Schiff received the Wigmore Hall Medal for his 30 years of musical activity. In January 2012, the artist was awarded the Golden Mozart Medal of the International Mozarteum Foundation. The following June, he received the "Order pour le mérite for Sciences and Arts". In the same year he was appointed as an honorary member of the Wiener Konzerthaus. Sir András Schiff was awarded the Grosse Verdienstkreuz mit Stern of the Federal Republic of Germany in 2012. In December 2013, he received the Gold Medal of the Royal Philharmonic Society in London for his outstanding musical work, the highest award of this society. In July 2014, he was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Leeds and in March 2018 by His Royal Highness Prince Charles as President of the Royal College of Music. In June 2014, he was appointed Knight Bachelor by Queen Elizabeth II for his services to music. In June 2022, Sir András Schiff was awarded the Bach Medal of the City of Leipzig as "one of the most important Bach interpreters of our time".

Don't miss out on the next concert on the 74th Festival's music programme this Saturday, 15 July on the Revelin Fort terrace where the international fado star Mariza will take the stage for the first time at the Festival and in Dubrovnik. Tickets for the concert are available via the festival website www.dubrovnikfestival.hr or the service www.ulaznice.hr, at the box office in the Festival Palace (Od Sigurate 1) every day from 9:00 am to 9:30 pm and in front of the DTS building (Vukovarska St) from Monday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 pm.

The Dubrovnik Summer Festival – the centre of Croatian and global spirit and culture, a place of creation and not just a place of visit, a place of community, ideas and new artistic expressions, is traditionally supported once again this year by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia, the City of Dubrovnik, the Dubrovnik-Neretva County, Dubrovnik Tourist Board and numerous sponsors Mastercard, Dubrovnik Airport, ACI club, ALH, Euroherc, Studenac, HEP, Croatian Lottery, Coca-Cola, MG Motors, Kraš, Croatia Airlines, and donors OTP bank, Atlantska Plovidba alongside other benefactors who helped bring this most prestigious cultural event in Croatia to fruition.

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