

IZVESTIA, ST PETERSBURG

STUNNING, BRIGHT... MUSIC

On Saturday, May 29, The Grand Hall of St Petersburg Philharmonia witnessed the Russian Premiere of 'Requiem Aeternam for Princess Galyani' especially composed by Boris Tishchenko in memory of HRH Princess Galyani Vadhana. After the concert the experienced St Petersburg audience confessed that they had not expected it to be so powerful an experience.

By **Irina Tumakova, music critic of Izvestia Newspaper** (largest federal newspaper in Russia)

There was a time in Leningrad when it was next to impossible to get tickets for a premiere featuring Boris Tishchenko and Alexander Dmitriev. Nowadays, unfortunately, we do not have such a strong thirst for the arts. Nevertheless, on Saturday, May 29th, when the playbill with mentioned stars was enriched by the names of soprano Zhanna Dombrovskaya, mezzo-soprano Olessya Petrova and the chorus of St Petersburg Academic Kapella named after Glinka, the grand Hall of St Petersburg Philharmonia was packed. And I should add, that in the audience were people of all ages. "Have you noticed how many young faces there are?" an elegant dame asked me. She turned out to be an ex-class-mate of the composer. "I have always felt a special attraction to his style and harmony," she confessed to *Izvestia*, "And what an original combination – Requiem, Thailand...."

The less experienced public was also intrigued. An acknowledged St Petersburg advocate Natela Ponomareva who also came to the premiere said, "I hope that tonight we will hear something really interesting." And she did. The youngsters were more emotional. Ninteen-year-old Kostya Pokrovsky had dragged his mother and his grandmother to the concert. Said his mother, "I love Boris Tishchenko very much, but I have never heard his live music. Digital sound does not suit me at all. Why do we really have to wait for such an event as a premiere in order to listen to live music? "

Part one of the concert featured Prokofiev's Symphony № 7 – vivid, clear, light, very Russian music full of deep wisdom and the inimitable Prokofiev's humour. The second part brought the much awaited Requiem. Its first notes – salty... bitter like tears. All expectations of exotic elements and Eastern colouring suddenly disappeared. This was music. Music beyond nationalities and religions, just like human tears and pain.

It would be difficult to describe the solemn and menacing *Rex tremendae* by the chorus, the way the two female voices were sobbing in *Libera me*, the anxious sound of the violins in *Lacrimosa*. Solitude, anguish, pain, entreaty... suddenly there's humility, light, sadness, and finally eternal rest.... When the music finished, the hall was silent for several seconds. Then came a burst of deafening applause.

"Music – stunning, original, bright... As if it came out of depths of the earth," Galina Ivanova said. "Especially the coda; quite a new vision. And how refined and complicated the vocal parts of the soloists are, the harmony built on melody! "

The young Kostya Pokrovsky was no less excited, "Such tender music, and such contrasts. An unsurpassed gallery of mighty images! I believe this music will become a world-famous piece!" As for world fame, time will tell. Now we can only convey the impressions of the Thai people who attended the Russian premiere. The young Im, a student of philology in St Petersburg University, only whispered, "I think that Her Royal Highness would love this music."

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