

Holiday for strings

By MAXIM REIDER
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At Keshet Eilon, 50 talented young violinists from around the world hone their skills under prominent teachers, performers.



Keshet Eilon, the international master course for violinists and string players, will take place in the Western Galilee from July 22 – August 9. About 50 young and talented violinists from around the world will come to hone their skills under the guidance of leading teachers and performers. Among the faculty members are London-based Israelis Izhak Rashkivsky and Ani Schnarch from the Royal College of Music – the course founders;

Eduard Grach of the Moscow Conservatory; Shmuel Askenazi (Israel/US); Ilya Gringolz (Russia); Hagai Shaham and Hillel Tzori (Israel) and Vadim Gluzman.

The course hosts two honorary guests – former IPO concert master Haim Taub and legendary violinist Ivry Gitlis, who celebrates his 90th birthday at Eilon. The course program features individual lessons, master classes, concerts of both students and teachers, as well as special programs and events. The course activities are open to the public, some for free and some for a nominal fee. On August 1 a gala concert will take place at TAPAC. Lodging is available in Eilon and in surrounding kibbutzim and villages. The combination of nature and musical enjoyment make for a great vacation.

Russian-born Chicago-based Israeli violinist Vadim Gluzman, 38, who participated in the first Keshet Eilon course 22 years ago as a newly arrived immigrant, now makes it a point to return to the kibbutz from time to time as a teacher.

“For me, coming back to Eilon is coming back to myself,” says Gluzman in a phone interview from Mexico, where he is currently performing. “There, aside from the many technical aspects of violin playing, I have been enriched by many precious musical ideas, which stem from communication with my colleagues.”

When asked about his current activities, Gluzman half jokingly says there is nothing new in his life: “I am still with a violin in my left hand and a bow in my right. Even now, I am practicing in my hotel room. Last night, I performed a Bach violin concerto and In Tempus Praesens, the second violin concerto by Sofia Gubaidulina, which I have also recorded. This gave me another opportunity to meet this amazing composer. If there is a human X-ray, this is she. But the result is the ultimate understanding between the performer and the composer – there is simply no need to talk.”

With all due respect to the violinist's modesty, this "nothing new" is not precise. During the last four or five years, Gluzman has moved to the top of the violinist league, performing with major orchestras throughout the world.

"After Mexico I will finally spend two weeks at home. And then, after appearing at the BBC Proms, I will teach at Keshet Eilon and later at the Mozarteum International Summer Academy in Salzburg. By now, I've learned most of the major concerto repertoire, which is about 50 pieces, maybe with the exception of those that are not dear to me, and now I am trying to bring the familiar concerti to how I see music today."

Gubaidulina is not the only contemporary composer with which Gluzman collaborates. American composer Lera Auerbach is currently working on a concerto that is dedicated to Gluzman and will have its world premiere in the 2013-14 season. He also works with the Estonian Arvo Part and American Michael Daugherty, among others.

"I simply enjoy playing new music, but I also believe it is our responsibility to perform it because otherwise it will stop developing and die. It is also a must to meet a living composer to discuss his or her work. Among other things, it has helped me to understand that every written note is ultimately important for the author.

Interestingly enough, this understanding has changed my approach to the music of the past. For me, it is now more difficult to allow myself to deviate from the musical text. That said, I also realize that music is not a museum exhibit – it is very much alive. And as Isaac Stern said, music is not in the notes but between them. And capturing it – while the notes are still completely devoted to the composer – is what preoccupies me nowadays as a performer."

Among his other activities is the North Shore Chamber Music Festival, of which he is the artistic director, while his life and musical partner pianist Angela Yoffe is the CEO. The festival, which was inaugurated in 2011, immediately earned rave reviews and was a sold-out event in its second edition in June 2012.

"To be honest, for me this is a totally egotistic enterprise," says Gluzman. "I felt that with all these concert activities, I do not play enough chamber music, so I invited my friends to play with me. This festival is a social experience as much as it is a musical one – after the concerts, the audience stays to discuss the music with the artists."

The Keshet Eilon International Master Course takes place July 22 – August 9, with the gala concert at TAPAC on August 1. For more information: <http://www.keshetei.org.il/> For reservations: (04) 985-8191/131