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"Music in the Mansion 2015" started with the concert of Italian soprano Elisabetta Russo



Italian soprano Elisabetta Russo

By Nicola Busca
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To host one of the most important cultural events in town, there is no better place as the Greystone Mansion in Beverly Hills. On Sunday 25th, in particular, the estate was the location of the 2015 "Music in the Mansion" opening. The music festival will run until July 24th, with a total of 7 high-level classical and jazz oriented performances.

The overture of the festival's new season spoke Italian, thanks the refined interpretation of soprano Elisabetta Russo, charming and powerful singer born in Bari but now based in Los Angeles. She performed in a one-hour concert, singing pieces by French composer Claude Debussy (Nuit d'Etoiles and Romance), the Italian Francesco Paolo Tosti ('a Vucchella, Due Piccoli Notturmi, Goodbye) and Giacchino Rossini (La Danza), the Hungarian Franz Liszt (Oh! Quand je Dors), and the French Erik Satie (Je te veux, La Diva) and Francis Poulenc (Les chemins de l'amour).

After her show, the Armenian-American mezzosoprano Karin Mushegain followed with a more contemporary repertoire, which included pieces from the Cuban and Norwegian traditions. The theatrical Mushegain also performed the opening and closing duets with Elisabetta Russo: *Prenderò quel Burattino*, from the famous *Così fan Tutte* by Austrian national hero Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and the amazing Flower Duet from the *Lakmé* by French composer Léo Delibes.

Both Russo and Mushegain were selected to open the Music in the Mansion 2015 as winners of the Beverly Hills Audition 2014, featuring the most talented music players and singers to participate in the events hosted in the Mansion and other important appointments, such as the Manhattan Beach The Previews, the Sundays Live! At LACMA, the Music by the Sea in Encinitas, the Laguna Beach Live and more concerts series in the Consortium of Southern California Chamber Music Presenters.



Just before the performance at the eclectic-style Greystone in Beverly Hills, Elisabetta Russo also sang at the Encinitas Library on January the 23th and at the First Lutheran Church in Torrance on the day after.

“To have the opportunity to open this series of concerts in the Mansion is a great pleasure and fulfillment”, said Russo. “I have been living in Los Angeles for a year now and I’m really happy about this opportunity.” During her first year in LA, working with great dedication, she made a name for herself: “I like the city very much. Of course there are more opportunities if compared to other cities, but the competition is among more artists. I was able to create a circle of people who appreciate and recognize my work, but this was possible only by working hard every day: no recommendations, but only a strong ommitment».

Music in the Mansion will offer an event every month: pianist Hayk Arsenian on February 22nd, followed by the Muhlfield Trio on March 22nd, the Alma Quartet on April 19th, cello player Hans Kristian Goldstein on May 17th, the Wyman Project (piano, violin, viola, cello, bass) on June 21st, and the iPalpist Soloist as the Grand Finale on July 24th.

Tickets cost 20 dollars and include a visit to the historical villa’s ground floor, unluckily famous not only for the many films, TV series, and music videos filmed in the locations, but also for the bloody murder-suicide that involved in 1929 the former owner of the house Edward “Ned” Doheny Jr., son of oil tycoon Edward L. Doheny.