

## Ruslan!

Thursday Evening Concert

On Thursday evening convention attendees had the opportunity once again to experience the artistry of **Ruslan Biryukov**. Ruslan presented a cello recital as winner of the 2007 Mu Phi Epsilon Foundation International Competition. He performed six pieces that showcased the expanse of his talent and was accompanied by the indomitable **Mary Au** on piano.

He opened with David Popper's *Hungarian Rhapsody* and gave a performance that did not seem possible to match. He continued on with Robert Schumann's *Fantasy Pieces* and finished the first set with *Allegro de Concert* by Karl Davidov. Ruslan told the audience that to his knowledge, he is one of only two cellists who dare to play the Davidov composition in live performance.

The second set opened with Chopin's *Introduction and Polonaise Brillante*. The fifth piece on the program entitled *Dedication* was composed by Arkady Luxemburg in memory of M. Rostropovich, Ruslan's late teacher. The recital closed with Shostakovich's haunting Sonata in d minor.

Those who attended also had the opportunity to learn a bit about Ruslan and hear about the history of the pieces he shared with us. Ruslan's performance more than exceeded expectations; each piece built on the previous and kept those listening eager for more. His next performance is eagerly awaited by all.

by Christina Ridgway, *Gamma Psi*



Photos by  
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## Music, Music, Music

Friday Evening Concert

Magnificent, multitudinous, musical moments mesmerized Mu Phi members meeting at the evening concert on Friday. Fanciful flying fingers of pianist **Paul Verona** diligently delivered delight to each ear when he began the cascade of talent by performing Isaac Albeniz: Selections from *Iberia* in four movements.



Violinist **Jorge Avila**, 2001 International Competition winner returning for the third time, raced in from the airport searching for his violin. Once it was in hand, he began his performance with a very interesting anecdote about Mozart altering his work because he had been critiqued and advised to change it. The *Adagio in E Major, KV261* was as beautiful as described and performed exquisitely to perfection.

Duo pianists **Lenora Brown** and **Gaye England** titillated the audience with Witold Lutoslawski: *Variations on a Theme by Paganini* and Franz Liszt: *Mephisto Waltz*. The audience stood in thunderous applause upon the completion of their performance.

Oprah should really consider the request to name *World of Women in Classical Music* as a selection for her book club. The author, **Dr. Anne K. Gray**, presented it in a very humorous manner, but nonetheless it addresses serious issues for raising consciousness.

Composer **Mary Lou Newmark**'s multimedia work *Street Angel Diaries*, a presentation of twenty-first century music, powerfully addresses current issues. Pianist **Lei Weng** arrived shortly before the convention from an Asian tour of master classes and recitals. His performance was masterful, dramatic, turbulent, expressive, and impressive. The program concluded with coloratura soprano **Arietha Lockhart**, whose dramatic performance and variety of selections brought the audience to their feet repeatedly.

The program, though long, was yet much too short. So **much** music and so **little** time!

by LaVerne M McCoy, *Gamma Sigma*