

Pianist plays for moms-to-be

Famous pianist Anjelika Akbar will play a special concert for pregnant moms - and anyone else - this Sunday at Bosphorus University. Akbar will select a soothing and peaceful repertoire open to improvisation and inspiration by her special audience

DAMARIS KREMIDA
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Pregnant women in Istanbul will have a rare treat: A concert dedicated to them and their babies this Sunday, Feb. 17 at Bogazici University. The concert will be given by Anjelika Akbar, the well-loved classical pianist, who is also an expectant mother due to give birth to her second son in two months.

Even before she became pregnant she thought it would be great to give a concert for pregnant women "when I'm in that state of 'soul,'" Akbar told the Turkish Daily News. She believes she will be able to relate to this special audience better than any other musician and that as women working in a big city, mothers-to-be needed the musical relief. A believer in musical therapy, she said, "I believe specifically in big cities most pregnant women work and the best way to decrease their work stress is music."

Akbar's repertoire on Sunday evening will consist of "the most peaceful and relaxing samples" of her classical repertoire. "During the concert I'll improvise with the themes women inspire me with at that moment," said Akbar.

The music was carefully chosen by Akbar to help babies yet to be born to better develop while the music "touches" them and reaches their developing ears. The reverberations of music are just as necessary as nourishment for developing embryos, Akbar said. "Music is a vibration and a baby needs clean and beautiful vibrations as much as it needs vitamins, protein and minerals, because what is inside me is not just a human body, but also a soul or spirit," said Akbar.

If babies hear music while in their mother's womb, the transition to the out-

side world will also be made smoother, Akbar said. When the baby is born and listens to music he or she will recognize the tones, making it peaceful and happy. "Those tones will sound to his ears as familiar as the sound of his mother and father," said Akbar. Akbar recommends to all pregnant women a steady auditory diet of the classics Mozart, Bach, Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff and Chopin. She said soothing New Age music and Indian Ragas are appropriate for women who enjoy more ethnic or oriental music.

Music as a way of life

Music for Akbar is an integral way of life not just a job or profession. "Music passes through my husband, my children, my family and social responsibilities like a breath; there is no separation or difference between them," said Akbar who has absolute pitch, a "gift" endowed to few people. "I live music every second and I don't need any musical instruments. I already compose many of my works without piano, specifically my symphonic compositions." Regardless of her own natural gifts, Akbar believes her new baby will be the source of great joy and energy as was her first son who is now 17. This joy and energy will help her to recover from the birth, she said, and for that reason she has already started booking concerts 2-3 months out after the birth. "I gave many concerts during my pregnancy, so my son is already used to the stage. After birth he will get used to backstage," she joked.

A concert for a cause

The proceeds of the concert will be donated to the American Hospital's fund "Let's Give Babies Life". The fund helps families with prematurely born or ill babies take care of the mounting medical expenses that they incur.

Sunday, Feb. 17 at Albert Long Hall at Bogazici University, Bebek www.biletix.com



'Turkish music is exotic and different'

Anjelika Akbar's relationship with Turkey began when she was eight months pregnant with her first son 17 years ago coming to Turkey to collaborate on soundtracks for UNESCO. She had come from the USSR. A month later she gave birth and the USSR disintegrated and she ended up staying in Turkey. "I met so many beautiful people here and thanks to them I love the country and I never felt as a foreigner here," she said. "Gradually Turkish music started to enter my life. It was exotic and different,"

she said in Asia where she had lived, music was more Westernized and "Russian". "Here I feel like I am just in the center of the Orient, and specifically Turkish folk music began to appeal to me because I'm not only a pianist but also a composer. The effect of other cultures began affecting and enriching my work," she said. Her works that include these influences are: Bach A L'Orizontale, Breezes from Anatolia, Oriental Fantasy, Chrysanthemum and the Horizon of the Sunrise, which she dedicated to Atatürk.