



cover story

An admirer of Vladimir Horowitz while studying in Moscow, modern day piano virtuoso and Russian-born **Lola Astanova** embraces her former fellow countryman's style and exciting technique to bring power and beauty to the stage for a quintessential performance next month. **The Palm Beach**

Symphony, under the direction of Spanish conductor **Ramón Tebar**, combines two classical powerhouses for a commanding concert to close the orchestra's 2015-2016 season.

With unmatched synergy, Astanova and Tebar will put their talent and collaboration on display on April 10th as the Palm Beach Symphony presents *Monumental Engagement* at the Raymond F. Kravis Center for the Performing Arts. The two vivacious musicians have been finalizing the performance pieces and rehearsing Mozart's drama-filled *Piano Concerto No. 20* that will undoubtedly fill Dreyfoos Hall with the emotion and passion these artists are known for.

Born in the former Soviet Union with a natural musical gift, Astanova has been playing since the age of six and deemed a phenom since her first lessons. Her extensive training in Moscow started with her mother, but quickly transitioned to renowned piano professor **Tamara Popovich** for technique, alongside **Mark Rusak** for harmony and counterpoint. She studied with the famed **Lev Naumov** of the Moscow Conservatory, considered the godfather of piano performance. Naumov considered her Chopin to be "simply exquisite."

Astanova has garnered a long list of musical accomplishments, performing everywhere from the *Today Show* to her debut at Carnegie Hall hosted by **Julie Andrews**. Millions of YouTube fans are enamored with her talent and persona. She has played a number of notable artistic performances with the Cleveland Orchestra and



Lola Astanova and Ramón Tebar

San Diego Symphony, including many collaborations with San Diego Symphony's Music Director, **Jahja Ling**. Astanova has also performed numerous times with Palm Beach Symphony, Louisiana Symphony Orchestra, West Virginia Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra of St. Luke's and Miami Symphony Orchestra. Currently, she is completing her 10 part series, *La Musique et L'Ardeur*, which has continued to receive rave reviews. She was also invited to perform under the direction of Maestro **Gerard Schwarz** with the All-Star Orchestra for a PBS special that aired in 2015 and has been requested to return for another PBS feature performance scheduled to air in the 2016-2017 season.

She makes no apologies for her glamorous appearance, or for her views and efforts to change the landscape of classical concerts. "Classical music was born in a time and place when the masters were free, and expected to express the human spirit," stated Astanova. "I want to be fearless and the concert to be exciting. Over the years, Ramón and I have developed an understanding of each other's musicality and styles, allowing me to perform in a way I can reach the audience."

To buy tickets for *Monumental Engagement* and for more information, visit www.palmbeachsymphony.org or call the Kravis box office at 561.832.7469 or 800.572.8471.

PHOTOS: ESTEBAN PARCHUC