

# Musical Diplomacy

*The Show Goes On at Hungarian Embassy Series Concert*

| BY KAELEIGH FORSYTH |

**N**ot even a powerful DC blizzard could prevent the musical event at the Hungarian Embassy from proceeding as planned on January 26. "After all," explained the Embassy's website the day of the performance, "we are a can do country!" But the best laid plans often go awry, and the electricity unexpectedly went out within the first half hour.

What ensued, at the delight of those who attended, was a beautifully romantic candlelit setting for an intimate performance by world-class pianist Adam György, followed by a gourmet meal by chef Viktor Merenyi. Guest Mary Ann Ericson said, "I felt as if we were sitting in a European salon of the 19th century listening to marvelous music."

This event was the first of the 2011 Embassy Series, hosted by the Embassy of Hungary in celebration of the country taking the seat of the rotating six-month EU presidency. Also worth celebrating was the arrival of new Hungarian Ambassador György Szapáry.

The quality of cuisine and entertainment at these events are never for want; at this one in particular the over 200 guests enjoyed the music of compos-

er Ferenc Liszt and dined on oven-baked chicken roll with potato ragout and sage jus.

The Embassy Series works to facilitate a cultural exchange among diplomats via the arts—an often overlooked avenue. Founder and President Jerome Barry explains why the program is both successful and necessary:

"With the strife, mistrust and miscommunication that is rife in this age of media saturation, one force remains that binds us together in a totally non-confrontational way: the Arts. Music truly is the universal language and stimulates us emotionally so we better understand our human condition."

Explains Barry, "The bedrock of diplomacy is seeking to understand what others think, feel and need and uniting people through Musical Diplomacy is the Embassy Series hallmark. It reaches into the crevices and innermost parts of our psyche and puts us in touch with our humanity and that of others."

The next performance in the series is penciled in for March 4th at the Museum of the Egyptian Embassy. In light of recent events, it may prove interesting to follow whether musical diplomacy will transcend politics at home in Cairo. [DC]



From left to right: Founder and President of Embassy Series, Jerome Barry sitting next to the new Hungarian Ambassador György Szapáry.



A standing ovation for world-class pianist Adam György. All photos by Morris Simon/The Simon Firm for the Embassy Series.