

LOCAL/REGION

Sizzling performance

■ WELLAND/PORT COLBORNE CONCERT ASSOCIATION'S FIFTH SHOW THIS SEASON WAS SENSATIONAL

REVIEW

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Opa! Translated from Greek – it is an exclamation that means, 'Wow!' and aptly describes Pavlo's performance at Centennial Secondary School's J.M. Ennis auditorium last Saturday evening.

Pavlo and his five piece band gave a sensationally sizzling performance for the Welland/Port Colborne Concert Association's fifth show this season.

It was an evening of fiery, mediterranean melodies and seductive rhythms as Pavlo, a composer, singer and musician of greek heritage, musically seduced his audience with original songs with a few classic covers thrown in.

Together with equally talented musicians: bouzouki players George Vasilakos and Spyros Gazetos; bass guitarist Randy Rodrigues; and percussionist Gino Marizio; Pavlo came out performing *Irresistible* and *Under the Heat*, two original instrumental compositions from his latest CD, the Juno-nominated *Irresistible*.

Pavlo was a confident performer at ease with his audience; his smouldering dark looks and brilliant guitar-playing talents making him a natural entertainer.

And certainly, when he sent out the invitation for someone from the audience to join him for a dance he didn't have to ask twice, a woman sitting just ahead of me jumped at the opportunity.

At another point during the concert, when performing his infectious,

Tsiftetelli (translated to *Belly Dance*), another woman, obviously having a background in belly dancing, jumped up from her seat at the chance to join Pavlo onstage.

Proving that he's not just another pretty face, Pavlo was a masterful musician and composer.

His signature move was swaying his hips while playing guitar, which appeared as if he was dancing while playing.

Pavlo's amazingly fast fretwork combined with shimmying strumming earned him his title of Greek god of the guitar. In a type of play-off between he and bouzouki players, Vasilakos and Gazetos, during the last half of their performance, all three musicians did some absolutely crazy playing with lightning fast fingerwork.

The challenge didn't end there though, they went on in humorous fashion to play instruments behind their back, on top of their head, and Vasilakos even picked the strings of his bouzouki with his teeth at one point. It was a brilliant show-down of vastly talented musicians.

Although many of his songs are original pieces, commissioned for movies and television shows, as well as by Canadian classical guitar legend, Liona Boyd, Pavlo covered a few well-known favourites: *Never on a Sunday* and *Besame Mucho*.

Pavlo's renditions were very much steeped in a Greek music tradition, and during their performance, Pavlo and other band members danced traditional Greek dances on stage.

Pavlo and his musicians really connected with the full-house crowd



TRIBUNE PHOTO JOE CSEH

Welland/Port Colborne Concert Association Kick-Off of the Renewal Season for 2006-2007 - Held Saturday March 4 at Centennial High School. Performance Saturday was by Pavlo.

and were exemplary musicians and entertainers.

Pavlo's performance wasn't just eye-candy for the ladies in the crowd, professional belly dancers Neetsa and Denise came onstage to belly dance to two songs, *Selini* and later for *Tsiftetelli*.

Both these women were gorgeously fluid and mesmerising dancers. The striking mirror images of these two, in stunning costumes and flowing scarves, were a spectacular addition to this concert.

Another concert bonus was the surprise performance of Toronto singer Patricia O'Callaghan – a talented young woman with an envious vocal range.

O'Callaghan performed one Edith Piaf song, *en francais*, and another Leonard Cohen classic, *Hallelujah*, to breathtaking perfection.

What a powerful voice this diva has – it didn't really match the Latin music of Pavlo, but it was an awesome aside to the concert.

Yes, there was something for everyone at this concert. Brilliant and passionate music, astounding players, and dazzling dancers, it was a cornucopia of rich, musical Mediterranean delights as Pavlo and company gave a sensationally hypnotizing performance that was very hot indeed!

Or, as the Greeks exclaim – Opa!