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Musical Iconoclasts

By: Susan Van Dongen , TimeOFF



Richard Steinbach will perform July 19 at the Golandsky International Piano Festival in Princeton.

Summertime, and the concert-going is easy, beginning with the Golandsky International Piano Festival.

We assume that professional athletes endure high levels of pain throughout their careers.

It might surprise some to know that a majority of professional musicians live with some kind of playing-related fatigue as well. Some have even had to curtail or end their careers because of tendonitis, carpal tunnel syndrome or focal dystonia, a neurological condition characterized by a loss in motor control of one or more fingers.

This ailment has been in the news lately, especially since the principal oboeist of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra had to let go of his position. Legendary pianist Leon Fleischer also had to retire because of focal dystonia. It was as though his hands weren't getting the musical signals from his brain.

Fortunately, before the malady gets to these tragic levels, many instrumentalists have discovered the Taubman Approach, a method of tuning into the body's natural sense of alignment. Invented by piano pedagogue Dorothy Taubman, the technique helps musicians add strength as well as agility to their playing, but most importantly, allows them to play pain-free.

Edna Golandsky, co-founder and former senior faculty member of the Taubman Institute — and leading advocate of the Taubman Approach — has taken the methodology even further, establishing the Golandsky Institute in 2003.

Envisioning a week of advanced study in the Taubman Approach, as well as a number of eloquent piano performances, Ms. Golandsky is presenting the Golandsky Institute 2005 Summer Symposium and International Piano

Festival at Princeton University July 17-23. The event returns to Princeton after a successful week in Princeton last summer, and brings together stellar talent from the keyboard performance world, with Latin jazz virtuoso Danilo Pérez capping the week of concerts. In addition, a new work by American music iconoclast George Crumb will be introduced.

Symposium participants will attend daily lectures on fundamentals of the Taubman Approach, technique classes, pedagogy clinics, teaching sessions and master classes with Ms. Golandsky and her world-renowned faculty, focusing on the integration of technique and musical expression.

Ms. Golandsky, artistic director for the symposium and festival, says, "in only seven days, many incredible transformations take place that make a real difference in the musicians' lives. We make it possible for them to play music that they never dreamed themselves capable of playing."

Trained at Juilliard, Ms. Golandsky is not only a world-renowned pianist and teacher, she has an intuitive knowledge of the body, at least as far as making the most of the forearms, wrists and fingers, getting them to move as best they can around the keyboard, organically and pain-free.

"It goes beyond physiology and medicine," Ms. Golandsky said in a *TimeOFF* interview from 2004. "Dorothy understood the invisible aspect (of playing the piano) — the fact that there is a whole world of motion that you cannot see. There really is no machinery for this but Dorothy Taubman figured it out."

The Golandsky Institute 2005 Summer Symposium and International Piano Festival *will take place at Taplin Auditorium in the Woolworth Music Building, Princeton University, Princeton, July 17-23. Performers include Michael Berkovsky, July 17; Ilya Itin, July 18; Richard Steinbach, July 19; Emanuele Arciuli, July 21; Father Sean Duggan, July 22; Danilo Pérez, July 23. All concerts are at 8 p.m. For detailed information about lectures and classes, visit the Golandsky Institute Web site: www.golandskyinstitute.org. All concerts and lectures are open to the public and cost \$15; \$5 seniors and students. \$100 gets admission to one day's complete events (no private lessons). Symposium fees: \$1,275 per resident participant, \$975 per commuting participant. For information, call (877) 343-3434 or (212) 875-0034.*