

# PREVIEW

## World Class Pianists In Our Own Backyard

by Elaine Strauss

**P**ianist Alexander Gavrylyuk, winner of the Artur Schnabel Masters Piano Competition in Tel Aviv, Israel, is the final performer in the six-concert series that accompanies the Golandsky Institute week-long piano symposium at Princeton University from Sunday, July 15, to Saturday, July 21. The evening concert series is known as the Golandsky Festival. Gavrylyuk's performance, like the other festival events, takes place in Taplin Auditorium in Fine Hall on the Princeton campus.

The Golandsky Institute is an intensive immersion in the physiologically sound approach to piano playing developed by Dorothy Taubman. The evening festival performances, primarily piano concerts, are open to the public, as are selected daytime events.

In a telephone conversation from Lecce, Italy, where he is performing in a festival, Gavrylyuk talks about his Princeton program. "Every time I plan a new concert, I try to think of one with a lot of contrast. I like to include different styles and make the performance multi-faceted."

His program includes the Bach-Busoni Toccata and Fugue in D Minor, BWV 565; Mozart's Sonata in D Major, K. 576; Schubert's Sonata in A Major, Op. 72 No. 11 and Filippenko's Toccata in C Major.

"Bach is the basis for all classical music, the foundation," Gavrylyuk says. "It's spiritual and universal. It has global ideas. Mozart's music is full of life and innocence. It touches the truth of mankind's history. The Schubert is the shorter A Major sonata. It shows Schubert's sensitive side with its delicacy, full harmony, and joyfulness. Rachmaninoff is a special composer to me personally. We're from the same region. The 'Etudes Tableaux' have an ocean of feelings, emotion, and passion. The piece touches the deep strings of the human soul. The Moszkowsky is light and brilliant. It gives me a chance to breathe after the heavy 'Etudes Tableaux.' The Filippenko is almost folkloric — fast and furious, and dance-like."

Gavrylyuk was born in 1984 in Kharkov, Ukraine. Both his father and mother graduated from the Conservatory in Kharkov, and specialized in the folk music of Russia and Ukraine. Both parents conducted small orchestras. He remembers attending his first concert in Kharkov. "It was Mussorgsky's 'Pictures at an Exhibition.' It struck me so much, I came out and couldn't sleep that night.

"As a child I was surrounded by music," Gavrylyuk says. "My grandparents always sang with friends, music with five voices. They had perfect pitch but no musical education." Gavrylyuk, who has perfect pitch, started piano at age seven and gave his first concert performance when he was nine.

"I spent most of my childhood at the piano," Gavrylyuk says. "At the end of the school year I went to my grandparents' place in a countryside village about 60 miles from Kharkov. It was close to nature and I was free and barefooted."

In 1998, when he was 13, Gavrylyuk won a scholarship to study in Australia. The following year he won first prize in the Horowitz International Piano Competition in Kiev.

Gavrylyuk's years in Australia were difficult for him. "I went with a group of students from Ukraine," he says. "I was the youngest. We lived for four years in the same place in Sydney. I got my high school education in Australia at a regular private school. I also had a scholarship in the Institute of Music. I was homesick and had language problems. I had no previous experience living outside my family. It made me grow up very quickly."

After completing four years of study Gavrylyuk, who is now 23, remained in Sydney. His fiancée, a pianist originally from Serbia, is a graduate of the Sydney Conservatory and is about to receive a degree in arts management. She travels with him as he tours internationally.

**T**he couple relocated to Moscow in December, 2006, just before Gavrylyuk gave his solo debut recital in the historic Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatorium. "We rented an apartment, but never stayed in Moscow because I was always away giving concerts," he says. "Now we're looking for a place to live in central Europe. We've been homeless since last month." During his homeless period, he is happy to visit Princeton for the first time to perform in the Golandsky festival.

Since 2004, founder and artistic director Edna Golandsky has brought her Institute to Princeton in July. Golandsky's work is based on the insights of Dorothy Taubman. The Taubman technique, by respecting the body's natural movements, results in tension-free playing that leads to technical and musical mastery without danger of injury.

Participants in the Princeton Golandsky Institute tend to be experienced performing pianists and piano teachers. With a tightly-scheduled daytime comucopia of workshops, lectures, and lessons, they learn to expand the variety of their sound and to refine their understanding of the piano repertoire as they absorb Taubman's principles. Participating in 2007 are approximately 150 pianists from the United States and abroad.

Curiously, pianist Gavrylyuk learned about Taubman's work on-

**Masters of the Piano:**  
*Clockwise from top left, Alexander Gavrylyuk, Ilya Itin, Father Sean Duggin, and Gulsin Onay.*

ly two months ago. "I don't know enough about the Taubman method to talk about it in detail," he says. "It's a method that explains how things actually work. Great artists do these things from intuition and because they have talent. They do these things automatically."

He shares an anecdote about the naturalness of excellent musical performance. "Once, after a successful concert," he says, David Oistrakh, the renowned Russian violinist, "asked himself why it went so well. He sat in the green room and thought about what worked. He analyzed his playing. The next time he picked up the violin, he couldn't play."

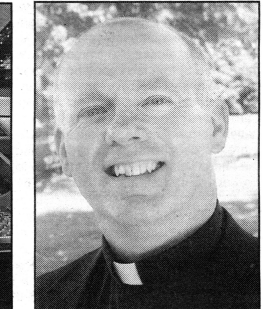
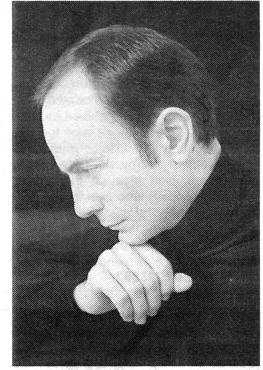
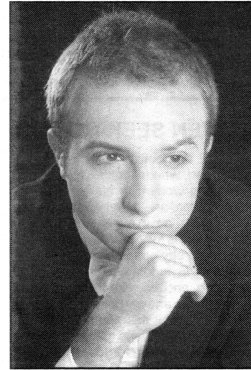
Indeed, by observing in minute detail how gifted artists move without thinking about it, Dorothy Taubman, Golandsky's mentor, developed her approach to sound piano technique.

Golandsky, in a telephone interview from her home in New York City, explains her choice of Gavrylyuk as a performer at her festival, despite his naivete about Taubman. "Performers are not always people tied to Taubman's work," she says. "They come highly recommended. I select them after hearing them in person or listening to their recordings. I look for people who don't play in a conventional way. I'm looking for superb pianists who are highly original in their thinking."

Golandsky heard Gavrylyuk at the Miami International Piano Festival in Miami, Florida, in May, 2007. "Sometimes competition winners are the result of consensus among the judges," she says. "They can be people who don't do anything wrong. But Gavrylyuk was electric."

The Miami Festival was founded in 1998 by Giselle Brodsky, a Taubman student, in order to provide guidance and resources in launching the careers of exceptional artists. Since 2003 it has maintained an additional presence in Lecce, Italy, the baroque town on the heel of the Italian boot in Apulia. "Giselle scouts people," Golandsky says.

Brodsky and Golandsky studied with Taubman in New York in the 1970s, when Brodsky was at the Manhattan School of Music and Golandsky was at Juilliard. After a period in her native Bolivia, Brodsky returned to the United States and commuted from Miami to New York City for lessons with Golandsky. Championing the Taubman method, Brodsky invited Golandsky to give workshops in Miami.



"She has become a power house," Golandsky says about Brodsky. "She looks for young talent. We have a very close relationship." Brodsky is among the faculty members at the Princeton Golandsky Institute.

The ever-energetic Golandsky has extended her reach beyond music. Conscious that repetitive stress injuries, such as carpal tunnel syndrome, also affect non-pianists, she has founded Moveright ([www.moveright-therapeutics.com](http://www.moveright-therapeutics.com)), where she works with her son, Amit Friedlander. In May Friedlander received two degrees from the University of Pennsylvania, one from the Wharton School.

"I always treated workplace injuries, especially computer injuries, but I decided to do it separately from the music," Golandsky says. "Moveright is exclusively for workplace problems and injuries. The website went up about two months ago. Amit put it together and has been the force behind getting the word out."

**Summer Piano Symposium,** Sunday, July 15, 8 p.m. Golandsky Institute, Taplin Auditorium, Princeton University. Opening night concert by Rachel Cheung, first prize winner at the Gina Bachauer International Junior Piano Competition in Salt Lake City. \$25. [www.golandskyinstitute.org](http://www.golandskyinstitute.org), 877-343-3434.

Monday, July 16, 8 p.m., concert by Ilya Itin on piano. Program includes works of Bach, Messiaen, and Chopin. \$25.

Tuesday, July 17, 8 p.m., concert by Father Sean Duggan, two-time winner of the Johann Sebastian Bach International Competition. He performs Bach's Goldberg Variations and Beethoven's Diabelli Variations. \$25.

Thursday, July 19, 8 p.m., concert by Musica Ficta features music of Latin America. \$25.

Friday, July 20, 8 p.m., concert by Gulsin Onay features works of Schumann, Mendelssohn, Elgar, Chopin, and Ravel. \$25.

Saturday, July 21, 8 p.m., closing night concert by Alexander Gavrylyuk includes works of Bach, Mozart, Schubert, Rachmaninoff, and Filippenko. \$25.

Also, special events in McCormick Hall. Admission \$20. Paul Roberts' "What's So Special About Impressionism?" Tuesday, July 17, at 4 p.m.; Edward Bilous' "Insights Into Learning: An Exploration into New Trends in Arts Education," Wednesday July 18 at 1 p.m.; and Scott Burnham's "Beethoven's Late Piano Sonatas," Wednesday, July 18, at 2:20 p.m.

Special events in McAlpin Hall, all scheduled for 11:15 a.m. and given by Golandsky Institute faculty. Admission \$15. John Bloomfield's "Tradition, Transformation and Innovation: Exploring Lowell Liebermann's Three Improvisations," Sunday, July 15; Robert Durso's "An Advanced Seminar on Schumann's 'Carnaval,'" Monday, July 16, and Wednesday, July 18; Kendall Feeney's "Applying Taubman/Golandsky Principles to Jazz," Tuesday, July 17, Thursday, July 19, and Friday, July 20; and Father Sean Duggan's "Exploring Bach's 'Three-Part Inventions,'" Saturday, July 21.

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