

The Times

Golandsky Institute brings top pianists to Princeton

By Ross Amico | For The Times of Trenton

POSTED: July 11, 2014

For the Golandsky Institute, fine tuning begins not with musical instruments, but with the musicians themselves.

The Princeton-based nonprofit organization is the preeminent center for the Taubman Approach, which emphasizes natural movement and healthy technique to minimize pain and repetitive stress injury in musicians.

The institute will advocate and celebrate pain-free music-making with its 11th Annual International Piano Festival and concurrent Summer Symposium.

The Piano Festival begins Sunday and runs through July 20. Five of the six concerts in the series will take place at Taplin Auditorium in Fine Hall, on the campus of Princeton University.

A sixth, which will involve members of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, will take place at Princeton's Richardson Auditorium in Alexander Hall. All concerts begin at 8 p.m.

The series commences with a recital by 17-year-old Llewellyn Sanchez-Werner, who made his festival debut two years ago. At 15, Sanchez-Werner was the youngest student ever to be admitted to the college division of the Juilliard School of Music. A pupil of Ilya Itin, who himself will appear twice during the Golandsky Festival, Sanchez-Werner was recently named the recipient of the prestigious Gilmore Young Artist Award. Previous honorees include Yuja Wang and Jonathan Biss. Sanchez-Werner's program will feature works by Franz Liszt ("Vallée d'Obermann" from the "Years of Pilgrimage"), Maurice Ravel ("Alborado del gracioso" from "Miroirs," as well as "La valse"), Beethoven (the Sonata No. 31 in A-flat Major, Op. 110), Rachmaninoff (one of the "Moments musicaux"), and the pianist himself ("Chasing Serenity").

On Monday, pianists Sylvie Courvoisier and Ron Stabinsky will divide a concert devoted to new sounds from jazz standards to the avant-garde. The Swiss-born Courvoisier will be joined by violinist Mark Feldman, and Stabinsky will be joined by trumpeter Peter Evans. The musicians will per-



Pianist Ilya Itin will perform in a solo concert on July 19 at Princeton University's Taplin Auditorium and will join the New Jersey Symphony Chamber Orchestra in the Scheide Concerto Evening Thursday at Richardson Auditorium, both in connection with the 11th Annual Golandsky Institute International Piano Festival.

form their own improvisatory compositions, uninhibited by genre strictures. Evans and Stabinsky will also present music by John Zorn, Thelonious Monk and others.

Canadian pianist Lisa Yui will appear on Tuesday, in a program that will trace the progression of Romanticism from Beethoven through Claude Debussy. The concert will include Carl Maria von Weber's Piano Sonata No. 1, Beethoven's "Appassionata" Sonata, Debussy's "Estampes," and Franz Liszt's meditation on themes from operatic Bellini, the "Réminiscences de 'Norma.'" Yui's recent recording of works by Weber and Jan Ladislav Dussek was awarded the highest distinction in France's "Maestro" magazine.

Thursday, no fewer than four pianists will take the stage of Richardson Auditorium, to join the New Jersey Symphony Chamber Orchestra, for a concert made up of keyboard concertos by Mozart, Shostakovich, and Bach. Russian-born Ilya Itin will be the soloist in Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 12 in A Major, K. 414, as well the Piano Concerto No. 1 by Dmitri Shostakovich (the first movement of which hints at Beethoven's "Appassionata").

Another Golandsky stalwart, New Jersey-born Father Sean Duggan, will play the Keyboard Concerto No. 2 in E Major, BWV 1053, by Bach. In a post-authenticity-minded world, performing Bach on the piano may seem positively old-fashioned, but the instrument can lend an expressive depth and color to the solo line that could only have been dreamt of in the heyday of the harpsichord. Duggan, a Bach scholar of long experience, will bring all his authority to bear.

The concert will conclude with Itin and Duggan joining Sakura Myers and Nathan Grabow in Bach's Concerto for 4 Pianos in A Minor, BWV 1065, after a Vivaldi concerto for four violins. Mark Laycock will conduct.

Laycock was associate conductor of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra from 2000 to 2003. He was music director of the Princeton Symphony Orchestra for more than 20 years.

On Friday, German pianist Nina Tichman will be joined by Boston-born violinist Ariadne Daskalakis for a program ranging from Schubert to Stefan Heucke (b. 1959), whose work, "Skizzen, Ruinen, Alderfittige," will receive its Princeton premiere.

Two very different Polish composers will be represented, with Chopin's "Polonaise-Fantaisie," Op. 61, and Witold Lutoslawski's "Subito" for violin and piano. The concert will conclude with Schubert's "Fantasy in C Major," D. 934.

Golandsky powerhouse Itin will conclude the series with yet another exhaustive concert of works, this time by Frederic Chopin. Itin, a true pianist's pianist, has stunned on past festival appearances with comprehensive traversals of Debussy and Liszt. Two years ago, his concert of Chopin Preludes was lauded as one of the "Top Ten Classical Music Moments of the Year" by the Philadelphia Inquirer. The New York Times praised Itin as "brilliantly insightful" and characterized the recital as "superb."

This year's program will feature Chopin's "Andante spianato and grande polonaise brillante"; two Nocturnes in C-sharp Minor, the Op. 27, No. 1, and the Op. post.; the Barcarolle, Op. 60; and all four Ballades.

Many of the musicians participating in the series are beneficiaries of the Taubman Approach. A number have gone on to achieve their own certification. Some are teachers at the Golandsky Institute. The method was pioneered by Dorothy Taubman, who died last year at the age of 95. "The Taubman Approach to playing is based upon very carefully worked out and almost scientifically analyzed understanding of the most coordinated way to play the instrument, so as to utilize our natural strengths without stressing the body," says Adrienne Sirken, who is executive director of the festival and a certified teacher of the method herself.

"It's a way of learning coordinate movement at the piano that both prevents injuries — which are very, very common, actually, for pianists and other musicians — and also has been extremely effective in treating people when they have become very severely injured," she says.

In addition to aiding pianists, the Golandsky Institute has come to the rescue of string players, as well, through workshops and symposia held both domestically and internationally. Edna Golandsky co-founded the Taubman Institute in 1976. Its success led to the establishment of her own institute in Princeton in 2003.

The concerto concert came about as the result of a conversation which took place last summer at the home of Princeton benefactors and patrons of the arts, William and Judith Scheide. Laycock, who was present, had just conducted the Philadelphia Orchestra at Richardson.

"We've never had an orchestra collaboration before, and we've never had any concerto concert," Sirken says. Laycock "knew two of our soloists from last year, Ilya Itin and Father Sean Duggan, and he was familiar with some of the symposium work in the teaching of the Taubman technique, that we do so intensively during that week.

"And he said, look here, we have two soloists, both of whom have trained in this technique, who couldn't possibly be more different as artists from one another. And he said, how can it be that you studied the same approach, and you sound so completely different?

"This is the nature of the kind of work that we do, because it actually, counter-intuitively, enables people to be more individual even when they are studying the same approach. Sort of the nexus of this concert is four different concertos and five different pianists, which showcase how different the artistry is, even when all of these folks have benefited greatly from having studied the Taubman Approach."

Four nine-foot grand pianos, two Yamahas and two Steinways, will take center stage for this unique event.

The concert is yet another tribute to the Scheides and their abiding love for the music of Bach. William Scheide, a well-known Bach scholar, founded and directed the Bach Aria Group from 1946 to 1980.

The concert is only the latest example of the Scheides' generosity in bringing quality music to Princeton. Last month, they sponsored an appearance by Sir John Eliot Gardiner and his Monteverdi Choir, with the English Baroque Soloists. Again, thanks to the patronage of the Scheides, Laycock will conduct the Buffalo Philharmonic at Richardson on July 23.

The festival coincides with the Golandsky Institute's annual Summer Symposium. Orientation for the symposium will take place tomorrow night (registration begins at 2 p.m.), with symposium events beginning on Sunday morning.

Participants will attend lectures, master classes, technique clinics and other presentations, while taking part in private lessons, supervised practice time and interactive technique clinics. For more information, look online at **golandskyinstitute.org**.

11th Annual Golandsky Institute International Piano Festival

Llewellyn Sanchez-Werner, piano

When: 8 p.m. Sunday

Sylvie Courvoisier, piano, and Mark Feldman, violin, with Ron Stabinsky, piano and Peter Evans, trumpet

When: 8 p.m. Monday

Lisa Yui, piano

When: 8 p.m. Tuesday

Nina Tichman, piano, and Ariadne Daskalakis, violin

When: 8 p.m. July 19

Ilya Itin, piano

When: 8 p.m. July 20

Where: All concerts at Taplin Auditorium, Fine Hall, Princeton University

Admission: \$20, \$15 students and senior citizens

Scheide Concerto Evening

New Jersey Symphony Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Mark Laycock, with Ilya Itin, Father Sean Duggan, Sakura Myers and Nathan Grabow, pianos

When: 8 p.m. Thursday

Where: Richardson Auditorium, Alexander Hall, Princeton University

Admission: \$25, \$15 students and senior citizens; **princeton.edu/utickets** (anytime) or (609) 258-9220 (Monday-Friday, noon-3 p.m.)