

# *New piano makes a memorable debut at Cabrillo's Crocker Theater*

Pianist Yevgeny Sudbin wowed the large audience at Cabrillo College's Crocker Theater Saturday evening in a recital presented by John Orlando's



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*Classical Beat*

Distinguished Artists Concert and Lecture Series. The 30-year-old Russian pianist performed on the brand new Juanita Orlando Memorial Concert Grand Piano. This beautiful instrument, a Yamaha CFX, is Yamaha's latest

nine-foot grand, replacing the former flagship model, CFIII.

Sudbin's playing, supremely sensitive but without

sentimentality, brings out the music's subtle nuances. With a push/pull of tempo and volume, he enhances the emotional content of the music, perhaps even beyond what the composer imagined.

But far from being cloying or schmaltzy, his is an almost intellectual emotionalism, one that grabs the mind as well as the heart.

Haydn's "Sonata in B-Minor, HOB XVI:32" opened the program. Sudbin imbued this Classical era work with a variety of moods, from its authoritative opening statement, through a minuet so slow-moving it took on a nostalgic poignancy, to a diabolically fiery finale.

A set of four of Shostakovich's "Preludes" full of musical non-sequiturs, with Sudbin's

interpretation, made a kind of quirky sense.

Chopin's "Ballades Nos. 3 and 4," along with Liszt's "Transcendental Etude No.11," moved from ethereal to furious, with myriad shadings in between. The piano responded agilely to Sudbin's gently plucked arpeggios as well as to his insistently pounded chords. Ravel's "Gaspard de la Nuit" shimmered and sparkled amid rippling waves.

The clear tone of the CFX and the hall's crisp acoustics made the perfect vehicle and venue for Sudbin's performance. His playing, light on the sustain pedal, had no tendency to blur. The instrument, obviously quick to respond, gave his trills and volleys of repeated notes an ear-opening

presence.

Sudbin acknowledged the crowd's enthusiastic response with two encores, Rachmaninoff's dreamy, songful "Prelude in G Major, Op. 2 No.5" and his robust, march-like "Prelude in G Minor, op. 24 No.5."

The CFX, owned by the Aptos Community Foundation, will make a temporary home at San Jose's Yamaha Peninsula Music Center. John Orlando, who initiated the piano's purchase as a tribute to his mother, sees the instrument as a magnet to bring acclaimed pianists and orchestras to this area.

Two other events were going on that evening in Cabrillo's new Theater complex. A student production of "The Marriage

of Figaro" (a farce by Pierre Beaumarchais, not the opera) played in Crocker's small Black Box Theater. In the Recital Hall across the grassy quad, New Music Work's presented "Whirled on a String," an assortment of 20th and 21st-century works for mandolin and various other instruments.

On May 15, the Crocker Theater will be the site of the "Spring Festival of Bands," where Lile Cruse will conduct Cabrillo's Symphonic Winds, and Jon Nordgren will lead the Concert Band. I play percussion in both these groups. (Cruse and Nordgren will both take the podium this summer, directing stage bands for "Hairspray" and "The Full Monty," respectively.)