

## MUSIC

# Russian studies flavor concert programs at Schoolcraft College

By LINDA ANN CHOMIN  
STAFF WRITER

Students in Schoolcraft College's Chamber Music and Piano Concerto Performance program were hard at work practicing for a series of upcoming concerts.

Many of the young pianists recently returned from the St. Petersburg Conservatory where they participated in an intensive three-week piano program with students from across the country. Donald Morelock, director of Schoolcraft College's piano and applied music department, led the contingent of seven students to Russia. The program, for which Morelock directs performance study, was sponsored by Schoolcraft College and the International Fine Arts Institute in Wisconsin.

"It was exciting because we'd been there before," said Morelock. "We knew the faculty and were more comfortable with the situation to ask about technique and the Russian sound. The teachers treated the students like professionals. In Russia, there's great pride in being a classical pianist. They major in piano and music early. The teachers explained their secrets, how they developed their technique, how to develop the Russian sound."

The Schoolcraft College Chamber Music and Piano Concerto Performance program is considered one of the finest chamber music programs for pre-college piano students in the United States. Unlike many summer music schools for young pianists, students learn and perform concertos accompanied by a professional chamber orchestra. This year, the Ambassador String Quartet from Canada played

alongside students performing in the Forum Recital Hall.

Outstanding young pianist Sanjay Mody of Birmingham was one of the students polishing his performing skills under the direction of Schoolcraft faculty member Eugene Bossart last week. Mody took part in both the Schoolcraft and Russian piano studies. On Wednesday, Aug. 6, the 11-year-old will perform several classical works perfected in the intensive St. Petersburg Conservatory study program including sonatas by Beethoven and Scarlatti, a Mozart concerto and Waltz in A Flat Major by Chopin.

Coloratura soprano Penny Kindraka and mezzo soprano Susan Stott will join Sanjay for selections by Vivaldi and Respighi.

"I liked working with the string quartet because it seems more exciting when you have all of the instruments," said Mody referring to the two-week Schoolcraft program.

Mody has studied piano for five years, the last two years with Morelock. During his two trips to Russia, Mody studied privately with Tatiana Zagorovskaya, professor of piano at St. Petersburg Conservatory.

"The second time proved a lot better for the musicality of my playing, the sound and quality," said Mody. "I was playing the Beethoven concerto quietly and the teacher told me to bring out the arpeggio. Now that I'm home, I'll try to put that into my playing."

Most of Russia's leading composers, musicians, painters, and writers lived in St. Petersburg. The St. Petersburg Conservatory, one of the oldest in Europe,

## Return from Russia

**What:** A series of concerts by piano students in Schoolcraft College's Summer Chamber Music and Piano Concerto Performance Program. Many of the students also studied at the St. Petersburg Conservatory in Russia for three weeks this summer.

**When:** 7 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 6, and 7:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday, Aug. 7-8.

**Where:** Forum Recital Hall, F 530 on the campus of Schoolcraft College, 18000 Haggerty Road between Six and Seven Mile roads in Livonia.

was founded in 1862 by Anton Rubinstein. Glinka, Rimsky-Korsakov, Tchaikovsky, Prokofiev and Shostakovich all studied or taught at the conservatory. The spirits of these composers made quite an impression on Mody, Brian Rodriguez and Joseph Heremans when they performed in the St. Petersburg Conservatory Recital Hall and the palaces of Nevelsky and Sheremetiev.

"Walking the same floor as Tchaikovsky, I felt like picking up a tile and bringing it home," said Mody.

The fact that this was Brian Rodriguez's first trip to Russia deeply affected the 20-year-old pianist. Rodriguez, a Northville resident, recently completed his freshman year as a music major at Schoolcraft College.

"I learned a lot because it's a different culture and country so what I learned stuck with me,"

said Rodriguez. "All of the history there is really interesting and I was impressed by their appreciation for classical music."

Troy pianist Joseph Heremans appreciated learning Russian technique. This was the 16-year-old Country Day School student's second trip to the St. Petersburg Conservatory.

"I went back and saw a different approach to the music," said Heremans. "I also like St. Petersburg, the monuments and buildings."

Sanjay's mother Julie Mody chaperoned the students. She admires the Russian teachers because "they treated young students like Sanjay as an artist."

"They have a reverence for music as art," said Julie Mody added. "The Russians revere classical music. As far as Sanjay, I saw what the Russian studies did for him, opening him up to a different culture and historical perspective. It gives students a bigger sense of things and broadens their goals."

Tracy Kwang, a 13-year-old Novi Middle School student, was vacationing when the other students went to Russia, but did attend the summer Chamber Music and Piano Concerto Performance program at Schoolcraft College. Kwang won first place in Michigan Music Teachers Association concerto competition last year.

"It's a really good experience to play with an orchestra," said Kwang. "I was also in camp last year and thought it was very cool."

Julie Mody hopes the community will take advantage of the free concerts by Schoolcraft Chamber Music and Piano Concerto Performance students Aug. 6-8.



Russian inspired: Sanjay Mody of Birmingham, an outstanding young pianist, will perform several classical works perfected in an intensive piano study program at the St. Petersburg Conservatory earlier this summer.

## COMING ATTRACTION

# Come on a Dream Cruise with special students

By LINDA ANN CHOMIN  
STAFF WRITER

Students and staff from the Kennedy Center in Pontiac are putting on their own Dream Cruise Musical and Car Show 9:30 a.m. to noon Thursday, Aug. 7 as a preview to the Woodward Dream Cruise the following weekend.

The Kennedy Dream Cruise

kicks off with a musical on the Kennedy Center stage with special needs students, ages 3 to 28, performing music of the 50s and 60s. The Dream Cruise musical features singing, rhythm instruments and wheel chair dancing with everyone students and audience, joining in the fun. Kennedy teachers Ernie Berry and Ralf Kohn will assist students by emceeing and playing

guitar. After the musical, vintage cars from local businesses and clubs such as Corvettes Incorporated, North Oaks Corvette Club, Southern Motors, and Max Auto Supply will go on display outside the Kennedy Center. Car enthusiasts from the community are invited to bring their vintage cars for display.

"We're doing a Dream Cruise

because our students won't be able to participate in the Woodward Dream Cruise because many of the students are severely mentally impaired with low verbal skills," said music therapist Margaret Hull of Birmingham.

"The Dream Cruise is also a way to enlighten the community as to what we do at the Kennedy Center."

The Kennedy Center, a program for students with special needs from Rochester, Oxford, Lake Orion, Pontiac, and Auburn Hills, offers a wide variety of education and support services. The teaching staff, which produces an event every summer to emphasize each student's abilities, plays an important role in assisting students to develop mental and physical skills.

"In the process of doing the performance, students learn how to follow directions, learn words to songs, and how to be part of a group," said Hull.

The Kennedy Center is located at 1700 Baldwin north of Walton. Admission is free. For more information, call the Kennedy Center at (248) 333-1424.



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