



PRESS RELEASE

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JULY 14, 2006

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Media events:

July 14

Winner's Recital: Noon at the Fitzgerald Theater in St. Paul.

Awards Ceremony: 5:30-6:30pm in Orchestra Hall

Gala Concert: 8pm in Orchestra Hall

SAVITSKI WINS MINNESOTA INTERNATIONAL PIANO-E-COMPETITION

MINNEAPOLIS, July 14—Edisher Savitski played his first recital when he was only two years and ten months old. His first memory of the piano is of climbing upon the bench. His mother, a piano student in the Republic of Georgia, was organizing a concert for the professors' children. Savitski attended the performance with his mother and, spying a piano, ran over to it. The organizers of the concert invited him to play a section of Für Elise and awarded him a certificate that he still displays at home.

Last night, the jury of the Third Minnesota International Piano-e-Competition—comprised of piano luminaries such as Claude Frank and Oxana Yablonskaya—awarded

-MORE-

Savitski Wins Minnesota International Piano-e-Competition

Savitski, now 29, another certificate: grand prize among the 132 young pianists who originally applied to the competition. Twenty-four of these contestants from around the world performed at Hamline University in St. Paul during the past two weeks. “This year’s contestants were of the highest caliber we’ve seen since this competition began,” states the Competition’s Artistic Director and non-voting jury member Alexander Braginsky.

Like previous Piano-e-Competition winners Mei-Ting Sun (2002) and Jie Chen (2004), Savitski receives \$25,000; a Yamaha 6’1” Disklavier grand piano; and a CD issued on the Ten Thousand Lakes label. Next fall, he will embark on a prestigious recital tour, including debut recitals at Salle Cortot in Paris and at one of the major concert halls in New York, a Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concert in Chicago, and recitals in various other venues throughout the United States. As the recipient of the grand prize, Savitski also has upcoming engagements with the Minnesota Orchestra, the Salem Chamber Orchestra, and the Richmond Symphony Orchestra.

Despite his precocious musical beginning, Savitski did not begin studying piano seriously until he was fifteen. Instead, he trained for alpine skiing competitions in the winters and studied piano only in the summers. After winning several skiing competitions and breaking his finger on two occasions, however, Savitski realized that he could not simultaneously pursue careers in skiing and piano. He chose music.

At age eighteen, Savitski began studying with Nana Khubutia at Tbilisi State Conservatory, the place of his first childhood recital. Three years later, after appearing many times in the Republic of Georgia in recitals and as a soloist with orchestras, he received a special grant from the President of Georgia. Savitski has been living in Indiana since 1998, when he joined the acclaimed piano studio of Alexander Toradze at Indiana University South Bend. Having graduated with his Masters degree and Artist Diploma

-MORE-

Savitski Wins Minnesota International Piano-e-Competition

this May, he will begin his doctoral studies at Michigan State University next fall.

Although he misses the mountains, he explains, “It is very rewarding when you feel you can engage an audience in live performance.”

Last night, he certainly engaged his audience. He performed Beethoven’s Emperor Concerto with the Minnesota Orchestra, conducted by Mark Russel Smith. As the crowd favorite, Savitski was given an instant standing ovation. Savitski has played for many audiences throughout the world. He has performed in New York’s Carnegie Weill Hall, Salzburg’s Mozarteum, London’s Wigmore Hall, and St. Petersburg’s Mariinsky Theater, as well as in venues in Japan, Israel, New Zealand, and throughout the United States and Europe. His performances have often been broadcasted on television and radio, including on NPR’s “Performance Today” show.

Savitski is especially excited about the technological aspect of the Minnesota International Piano-e-Competition. The competition utilizes Yamaha Disklavier grand pianos, which are a modern version of the traditional reproducing player piano. These pianos feature a built-in system to record live performances as Musical Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI) data. This data is livestreamed to the Internet, so that an international audience can tune in to the performance. Savitski states that friends in the Republic of Georgia and around the world watched his performances online. The technology “gives you the idea that you’re playing for a larger audience. It helps you to look beyond the competition—your audience is larger than the people present in the hall,” he says.

For Savitski in particular, the competition’s technology has another benefit. When he returns to his residence in Indiana with his new Yamaha Disklavier, he will be able to download the MIDI data to his piano. The data input will activate the keys and pedals of his Yamaha Disklavier and recreate his winning performance for his family and friends. In addition to his grand prize at the 2006 Minnesota International Piano-e-Competition, Savitski has received numerous other awards for his achievements. In 1999, he won

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Savitski Wins Minnesota International Piano-e-Competition

second prize at the William Byrd International Piano Competition and was invited to spend the summer studying at the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara. In 2001, he was one of six pianists to be invited to the prestigious Steans Institute at the Ravinia Festival in Chicago. In the same year, he also took first prize at the Hilton Head International Piano Competition. In 2002, as a participant in the first Minnesota International Piano-e-Competition, he received fourth prize.

The general public will have the opportunity to hear Savitski perform tomorrow. He will play a thirty-minute recital at noon at the Fitzgerald Theater in St. Paul. The performance will be live broadcast on Minneapolis Public Radio and the mayor of St. Paul will be in attendance. At the Awards Ceremony from 5:30-6:30pm in Orchestra Hall, the second through sixth prizewinners— Ryo Yanagitani of Canada, Victoria Korchinskaya-Kogan of Russia, Mikhail Mordvinov of Russia, Einav Yarden of Israel, and Gregory DeTurck of the United States, respectively—will receive their awards and perform short selections from their recital rounds. At the Gala Concert at 8pm in Orchestra Hall, Savitski will perform Beethoven's Emperor Concerto with the Minnesota Orchestra. The two events at Orchestra Hall are part of Macy's Day of Music.

All performances from the five rounds of the competition are available for the general public to download as MIDI files on their computers or Disklavier pianos. For more information on the competition, please visit www.piano-e-competition.com.

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