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NEAPOLITAN CONNECTION - INTERVIEW

Alexandra Dovgan

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May's Young Artist: Alexandra Dovgan



At the tender age of 11, the prodigious talents of Russian pianist Alexandra Dovgan have steadily been capturing the hearts and imaginations of musicians and music lovers worldwide. Already a seasoned performer often featured in Europe's most prestigious concert halls and international music festivals, as well as a prizewinner at 5 international music competitions, it is clear that Alexandra Dovgan is definitely one to watch. We are extremely pleased to present Alexandra in the following interview:

NC: How did your musical life begin?

AD: My aunt used to play a lot, as also did my mom and dad; then, at 4, I started playing, too. I listened to the music all the time, it just surrounded me. At a very early age, when I could not fall asleep, they would play me a recording of Gould's performance of Bach's Goldberg Variations, which I love very much. I also love Peter and the Wolf by Prokofiev and never tire listening to it. When the time came for me to go to musical school, mom and dad took me to the Central Special Musical School attached to the Moscow Conservatory, to join which you must be selected from among very many other candidates. The admission committee of ten to fifteen persons watches your hands, checks out your sense of rhythm and your ear, we sing, listen to, and guess, the intervals and accords, talk about music and



composers, and, of course, get asked to play, at least a little. And I somehow immediately liked that school, even its building, and I did my best to get admitted.

NC: Do you play any other instruments in addition to the piano?

AD: I tried to play organ, but unfortunately, I have no time to continue to take organ lessons. Probably at the future.

NC: Do you have a favorite music composer, or a favorite music composition?

AD: It's hard to tell, because I like each great composer for something peculiar for them, for some particular repertoire of theirs. I like this one in this thing, and another, in that. I like Bach, Chopin, Rachmaninoff, Rameau etc. I like all pieces, which I play. I like Mahler Symphonies and ballet music.

NC: Do you enjoy travelling? Which countries have your musical travels taken you to so far?

AD: Very much so. I like unfamiliar cities, unfamiliar auditoriums. Sometimes I manage to see some sites. Say, on the day of the Berlin recital we went to see the Reichstag and the Brandenburg Gate. In Amsterdam, I saw ladies in posh evening gowns come to the recital by bicycle. It was a very memorable scene. In Venice, Italy, a few hours prior to the concert, we took a gondola ride... It was a great experience. Also I like fantastic cities in Russia, like St. Petersburg, Vladivostok (on Pacific Ocean), Kaliningrad on Baltic sea...



NC: What hobbies do you enjoy when you are away from the piano?

AD: Among other things, I like to draw. When I was playing *Children's Corner* of Debussy, I drew a picture to each individual piece. Later on I also tried to draw pictures to Tchaikovsky Children's Album but did not complete for the lack of time. Now I like either to draw whatever I have a whimsy for or yet to color large pictures whose stencils are available for sale. I also love nature, love to stay out of doors, to ski and ice-skate... I like ballet and even have pointes at home and do toe dance. When opportunity strikes, I read. I like adventure stories and fairy tales.

NC: Last year, you received the Grand Prix at the 2018 International Grand Piano Competition in Moscow. What was that entire experience like for you?

AD: It was an interesting and remarkable moment. I found a lot of friends. I think all pianists who played at this Competition are already winners. Of course, it was a challenge, and I



worked few months with my great teacher Mira Marchenko. But it was an opportunity to play to professional musicians, to very warm audience. I did not think about the prize. I tried to do my best on stage.

NC: At age 11, how do you manage to successfully balance your school academics with such a busy musical life?

AD: Fortunately, I have a special individual plan in my School. And I am very grateful for my teachers, for their support. For this moment, I have time to work on other disciplines too. I like math, literature and history. I understand how is important to be well educated.

NC: Can you describe a very memorable performance experience you have had?

AD: Once I was playing open-air in Suzdal (which is a beautiful ancient Russian town). Before the recital, I heard the church bells peal and made a wish that they should peal so enchantingly again during the performance... And when leaving the stage I felt sad because they did not. But my mom told me afterwards that they did. But I simply failed to hear the ding... I've being so concentrated on the music, on what I am in the process of playing

NC: What do you dream of doing 10 years from now?

AD: To play piano, to be on stage, to have possibility to play everywhere, and to be high-level pianist.