Scriaban concert packs Recital Hall

Leanna Ahmed, Staff Writer | Posted: Tuesday, November 17, 2015 7:00 am

Cal Poly Pomona’s All-Scriabin Piano Concert was held in memory of Russian composer and pianist Alexander Nikolayevich Scriabin’s 100-year death anniversary at the Music Recital Hall on Nov. 12 during U-Hour.

Nadia Shpachenko, a music professor, directed the concert, and it featured CPP students, faculty and alumni.

As a composer and performer, Scriabin’s “bold” qualities are very inspirational to Shpachenko, her students and musicians all over the world, and she wanted to expose this to the community, according to Shpachenko.

“The purpose of this concert was to really spread awareness of this great genius composer who lived a little over a 100 years ago,” said Shpachenko. “He’s just an amazing composer. He has been so influential to so many composers over the years from Russian composers like Prokofiev and Stravinsky to many 20th century composers to pretty much all over the world and even to composers now. He is just a very inspirational figure who was very original and innovative.”

Scriabin lived from 1872 to 1915. In his early life, he was greatly influenced by Frédéric Chopin. He had synesthesia, a neurological anomaly that allowed him to link colors with tones, which later allowed him to create a unique atonal and dissonant musical style of his own.

Among a total of 11 compositions played, Shpachenko closed the concert playing “Etude in F-sharp minor, Op. 8, No.2.” She said that she enjoys to play this composition every chance she gets because of its “passionate and dramatic” qualities.

Joshua Tessler, a second-year music performance student, opened the concert playing “Prelude in C Major, Op. 48, No. 2” and “Prelude in B Major, Op. 27, No. 2.” He said that challenges presented in both pieces allowed him to “increase his level as a piano performer” and that everyone should recognize Scriabin just as much as all the other well-known composers recognized today.
“I find it very important for everyone to have the opportunity to listen to Scriabin because in the modern world he is not recognized as often as composers like Beethoven, Mozar, and others are, but the venue was packed,” said Tessler. “It made me very happy.”

Justin Mathew, an audience member, said that he was intrigued by the concert.

“I have always loved to listen and play the piano, which is why I came to this concert,” said Mathew. “I was not very familiar with Scriabin as much as I was with other famous composers, so I wanted to be here to experience his music live. I loved the concert, and I loved how you can definitely hear the modern sense to his compositions.”

Shpachenko said that she did not expect such a large audience outcome at the recital hall, and though it was “unusual,” it excited her a lot. She specifically chose to hold the concert during U-Hour because she wanted to bring as many students and faculty to the show. Shpachenko said she was also able to integrate a variety of performances into one hour because many of the pianists played shorter Scriabin works.

“There were people sitting and standing because there was no room,” said Shpachenko. “I was really happy that so many students and faculty members came; it was nice. That’s why I wanted to do it during noon hour with people on campus. It’s a good time for a concert usually, [and] I feel like this concert had a really great impact onto the community here. It really showed the talent of students that we have here on campus as well.”

Shpachenko said that she was very happy with the student’s composition choices; however, she collaborated with all the performers in order to create a program that consisted of a variety of compositions that complimented each other.

“We made sure that all the pieces complimented each other well and contrasted each other well, so I think that the variety of repertoire by Scriabin today was also great because it was able to keep the interest of the audience,” said Shpachenko.

Scriabin lived a short life, and Shpachenko said that one of her students told her that the concert was “short and sweet just like Scriabin.”

“He had a short life but had such great impact in his short life,” said Shpachenko.