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N.H. teen pianist to perform at Pakachoag Music School

By Richard Duckett, TELEGRAM & GAZETTE STAFF
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Vladimir Odnokikh began taking piano lessons early and was a national pianist competition winner in his youth — in the former Soviet Union.

Now a piano teacher who lives in New Hampshire, Odnokikh is seeing matters from another perspective, as one of his students has been winning a lot of piano competitions in the United States recently.

During 2012, Miles Walter, 18, a senior at Keene High School in Keene, N.H., won first place in the Stony Brook International Competition, and first prizes in the Bradshaw and Buono International Piano Competition and Williams Chorale Bacardi Fallon National Competition.

But it is the love of music and playing piano that is likely to be at the forefront when Walter gives a free recital at the Pakachoag Music School of Greater Worcester in Auburn at 2 p.m. March 9.

"It's a pleasure," Walter said of his upcoming performance, in which he will play works by Mozart, Liszt, Rachmaninoff and Rorem, and be joined by his teacher for a dual-piano piece.

Walter has never been to the Pakachoag Music School, but Odnokikh is a familiar face, as he also teaches piano there.

"He's a marvelous teacher. Without him, I wouldn't have really ended up playing with anything near the love and involvement with it," Walter said.

Odnokikh returned the compliment. "He is very, very talented. He is a very fine musician," he said.

Walter started playing the piano at the age of 5, and has been a student with Odnokikh since he was 11.

For all his recent success and awards, "I don't love the idea of competitions. It's sort of something you have to do," Walter acknowledged. "You have a chance to perform, which is fantastic. But honestly, at the end of the day you need to love what you're doing."

Walter has other interests as well, and recently played the title role in a school production of Shakespeare's most complex play, "Hamlet."

Odnokikh noted, "He is talented in different areas. He is not narrow minded."

That can create an interesting situation for a piano teacher. "I have tried to convince him to concentrate everything toward piano. But he is very well-rounded," Odnokikh said.

Odnokikh trained at the Tchaikovsky Conservatory and Gnessin Institute of Moscow, won prizes in the Russia National Competition and Chamber Music Competition of Soviet Composers, and performed with Rosconcert and the Moscow

Guest Piano Recital: Miles Walter with Vladimir Odnokikh

WHEN: 2 p.m. March 9. Snow date March 10.

WHERE: Great Hall, Pakachoag Music School of Greater Worcester, 203 Pakachoag St., Auburn

HOW MUCH: Free

Philharmonic. He went on to teach in Moscow and Mexico and has lived Richmond, N.H., since 2001. Besides Pakachoag, he teaches at the Keene Community Music Center and the Brattleboro Music Center, and serves as organist/accompanist at Keene Unitarian Universalist Church and is accompanist for the Keene Chorale. Odinokikh said he doesn't mind the commute to Pakachoag music school. "Even though it's a long drive, no problem. I really love to work there. The environment is so nice. The atmosphere is very pleasant. You can see immediately that people love music."

Asked if he thinks Walter could make it into the professional ranks as a classical pianist, Odinokikh said, "Yes, I think he could definitely." But he added, "He himself doesn't know for sure what he will do."

What people at Saturday's concert will hear when Walter plays is someone who is "emotional. He's passionate about music." But in addition to that he is also "very well balanced." Reading musical scores together, furthermore, "He has opened up my eyes," Odinokikh said.

Walter, who plans to study music and physics, has been accepted to Yale University, but said he is also considering other college options.

"I would love to," he said in response to whether he would like to be a professional concert pianist. However, once again Walter was thoughtful in considering the matter.

"It's very difficult to have a career as performer. It's very competitive," he said. He recognizes that at college he would have to enter more competitions and "see how I measure up. ...

"But there are lots of other ways to do music. There's teaching. There's chamber music. Regardless — it's something I will continue to do and love for the rest of my life."

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