

Serouj Kradjian finds that many Armenians who appreciate music do not encourage their children to pursue a career in music.



After receiving a degree in Toronto, Kradjian went to Germany where he studied at the Musikhochschule in Hanover and received the equivalent of a Masters degree at the age of 21. In the end, the different attitudes for classical music in Europe as compared to North America gave a younger Kradjian the confidence he needed to pursue a profession as a concert pianist. However, now Kradjian considers that his musical career, which began at the age of 10 and spans more than 20 years, gives him a more balanced view of classical music audiences in the world today.

Finding success outside of piano competitions also helped him maintain a more versatile and fresh perspective on his career and performances. "Many students of classical music believe that success is only found only in competitions, but I'm glad I decided against [competing in them]," he says, "I had to concentrate my energies on what I wanted to do instead of what juries wanted me to do."



Serouj Kradjian is grateful to his father for buying him a piano as a child in Lebanon.

Inspirations and processes of the artist

During his time in Europe, Kradjian says his interest in chamber music and vocal accompaniment grew, but in due course, he discovered arranging music as a new facet to concert piano. In fact three years earlier, Kradjian tapped into his cultural past for musical inspi-

ration in order to begin arranging Armenian music for orchestra and other instruments. Taking the work of Gomidas, the "Father of Armenian classical music," Kradjian arranged the composer's collection of Armenian folksongs, which were originally for voice and piano, for soprano and orchestra. The project covers more than 30 songs performed by Isabel Bayrakdarian and the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra. The CD was recently completed and is set for release in 2008 and Kradjian plans to take the arrangement on tour in North America with the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra shortly thereafter. "Arranging the music was a long process because I wanted to stay true to Gomidas's style by letting the orchestral texture reflect the pianistic colors of the accompaniment written by him," Kradjian says. Staying true to the music may have been even more important due to the music's unique value; the "beautiful and simple" songs were saved by Gomidas from possible extinction when the musician and priest traveled to Armenian villages to