

## Local Spotlight

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Supplied photo

Russian classical pianist Evgeny Starodubtsev kicks off the Arden Theatre's On Stage Series with a noon performance on Sunday.

### **International Honens laureate comes to St. Albert**

Russian pianist Evgeny Starodubtsev, 28, unleashes his classical virtuosity while launching the Arden Theatre's On Stage Series on Sunday, Jan. 23 with a noon performance.

Starodubtsev was first introduced to the accordion before shifting to the piano. A 2006 graduate of Moscow Conservatory's faculty of composition, he continues his studies as a post-graduate student at the institute.

Throughout his career, he has triumphed at numerous prestigious international competitions in Portugal, Spain, France and Italy including Canada's 2009 Honens Competition where he received \$25,000.

On Sunday, Starodubtsev's program contains works from four Russian composers. Alexander Scriabin's *Sonata No. 2 in G-sharp minor* has a Chopin-like romanticism with an impressionistic touch. Nikolai Medtner's *Sonata No. 9 in A minor*, a dark, terse work, was published as a war sonata. Igor Stravinsky's *Sonata (1924)* is from his neoclassical period where he abandoned large orchestrations preferring to focus on chamber works. And finally, Sergei Prokofiev's *Sonata No. 5 in C major* is full of sharp dissonant contrasts juxtaposed with lyrical passages.

"The program is constructed in such a way so audiences can talk to him about Russian culture and get insight into that part of the world," says Andrea Davison, Honens' manager of artistic operations.

Brunch is served at 11 a.m. Tickets are \$50. Call 780-459-1542 or online at [www.ticketmaster.ca](http://www.ticketmaster.ca).

### **The cream of cowjazz**

Back Porch Swing, the St. Albert four-piece band that coined the term "cowjazz," is hosting an intimate kitchen party at La Crema Caffé on Friday, Jan. 21 at 7: 30 p.m.

Known for their lively, unorthodox blend of western swing and bluegrass, Penny and Jim Malmberg, Cam Neufeld and Kevin Jacobson racked up a bundle of tours this past summer with performances at British Columbia's Music on the Mountain, Quebec's Shazam Festival and Driftpile's North Country Fair.

"And we're in the middle of making our third CD. It's going to be a compilation of live shows. We're recording the Friday concert and we might take some clips off of it," says vocalist Penny Malmberg.

Admission is \$15. Seating is limited. Reserve at 780-458-8225.

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