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Pianist Arunesh Nadgir to perform on Saturday

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When Arunesh Nadgir played Mozart to a standing ovation at age 15, he realised he could make a career out of playing the classical piano.

Today, as he pursues a doctorate in musical arts from the Eastman School of Music, USA, he knows he is on his way.

Arunesh (28), who lives in New Jersey, is set to entertain Puneites at the Mazda hall on Saturday in a programme organised by the Poona Music society. He seems excited. "I performed in Delhi last week and will now be performing for the first time in Pune," he said.

He recalls being flooded with questions from the Delhi audience after his show at the India International Centre (IIC). "It was a mixed crowd, both young and old and they seemed to like the music," admits Arunesh.

According to the young pianist, the world of western classical music is extremely competitive in the USA, but there are several avenues open for talented artistes. "You could become a concert pianist or a chamber musician or even teach piano at university. I have chosen to teach at a good university and pursue my own, solo performances. I am most comfortable with this combination," he says.

Russian composer Alexander Scriabin and Robert Schumann are Arunesh's personal favourites. "Scriabin has a very unique sound. There is very rich harmony in his early works, which I like very much. Schumann had a very personal way of writing his compositions. I found them difficult to comprehend initially, but today, some of Schumann's work are personal favourites in my repertoire."

However, Arunesh will not be playing either composer in Pune on Saturday. "No particular reason, really," he shrugs. "I just chose to play Beethoven, Liszt and Chopin." The performance will include Beethoven's Six Bagatelles' and the popular Appassionata in F minor', followed by Franz Liszt's Funerailles' and Chopin's Barcarolle and Waltz'.

Arunesh will also help budding pianists from the city in a special master class', organised at Mazda hall, at 4 pm on Sunday. "I am looking forward to this class, because this is precisely what my life is going to be from here on, teaching and performing," he says with a smile.

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