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# ACCENT

## To pianist, Chopin music spiritual

By Cathalena E. Burch

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Piotr Zukowski let his hands glide the length of the keyboard, then with lightning speed and ballet precision, his fingers danced across the black-and-white keys.

The sound he produced was divine, but perhaps more intriguing was watching his body language.

Zukowski, a 24-year-old pianist from Poland, bent his nearly 6-foot frame into the piano. He dropped his head to his chest, and barely a hand separated him from the keyboard. For a few delicious moments, he seemed lost in concentration.

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He was playing works by his fellow countryman, Frédéric Chopin. There's something spiritual about that music that takes Zukowski to another place.

"Chopin is very spiritual," he said just before that afternoon recital Thursday at the Atria Campana del Rio assisted-living facility on East River Road. "When you listen and play the music, it's Poland."

That hourlong recital before a half-dozen residents was the first of several performances Zukowski

had planned during his stay in Tucson. He arrived from Poland last Wednesday night to headline this coming Sunday's annual Chopin Association of Tucson dinner and concert, an event he performed at four years ago.

"He is very good," Halina Jasiak, who organizes the annual event, observed halfway into the recital. "Four years ago, he was a student. He has matured."

In Poland, Zukowski spends more time teaching than performing, and as he explains it, you get the sense that he's torn.

"I think teaching art is a very abstract thing," he said, his English broken by a thick Polish accent.

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Piotr Zukowski plays at Rio.

A.E. ARAIZA / ARIZONA DAILY STAR

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### PREVIEW

What: Annual Tucson dinner and concert

Guest pianist

Where: Hilton Tucson 7600 E. Broadway

When: 4 p.m. are being accepted

Cost: \$35, in concert.

He said he consoles himself, though, because through the course of teaching piano, he performs.

For reservations: Call 325-5028.

As for his career plans, he said he has none mapped out. He likes to take what life dishes up and see where it leads him.

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In his last Tucson appearance, Zukowski hiked Mount Lemmon. He hopes to do it again on this trip, but his itinerary is full, including an appearance in SaddleBrooke last Saturday and a recital and masterclass in Redlands, Calif., next week.

At Sunday's concert, he will play Chopin again. Don't be surprised if he gets lost at the keyboard as he did Thursday.

"It's very spiritual, very emotional," he said of Chopin and the effect the music has on him. "It's very sensitive music."

Contact reporter Cathalena E. Burch at cburch@azstarnet.com or 573-4642.



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