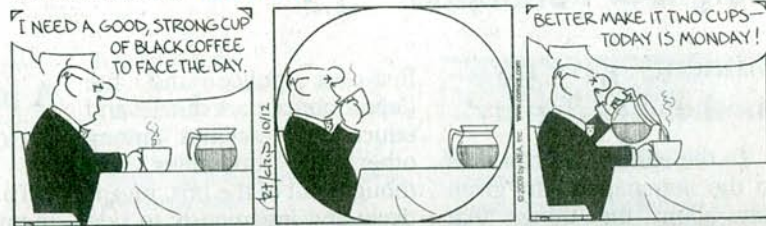


# Neighbor

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SECTION 5



## Pianist Rudolf Budginas to take classical music for spin

BY VICTORIA YUE  
 Daily Herald correspondent

Rudolf Budginas isn't interested in playing classical music the way it was written.

The 40-year-old Lithuanian-born musician is well aware of its reputation for being long and boring, but his Oct. 18 concert in Arlington Heights promises to be anything but a snoozer.

"I think classical music is in a danger zone," Budginas said. "For me, I try to give the audience a good time, so they don't fall asleep during the show."

The concert will feature Budginas's take on classical hits like "Moonlight Sonata"

and "Hungarian Rhapsody," as well as personal stories about growing up in Lithuania.

Originally trained at the prestigious Moscow Conservatory, Budginas says his musical sensibilities have been greatly challenged by the unique melting-pot culture of the United States.

"One time, I did a piece with Middle Eastern drums," he said of his first experimentation. "I played 'Rhapsody in Blue' and everyone went crazy and I thought, 'This is it!'"

Throw in some jazz, alternative rock and a generous dose of humor, and you might get an idea of what you'll find at one of Budginas's critically-acclaimed concerts.

"I just want them not to be afraid of classical music—or classical musicians—because we can be full of surprises," he said.

But just because Budginas seamlessly infuses Debussy's "Clair de Lune" with bluesy beats doesn't mean that he's not a serious musician.

"It's all very light and entertaining, but that doesn't mean I play stuff that's simple or funny," said Budginas, who has a doctorate in musical performance from the University of Southern California.

Budginas also has an eye on shaking up classical music for children with outreach programs that accompany every performance on his 85-show

tour. At these free concerts for children Budginas plays for however long the school will let him.

"I want them to think outside of the box, not think classical music is for old people only," Budginas said. "I play piano and djembe drum at the same time, and they go 'Oh my god, what is it?' because they didn't know it could be fun."

Budginas will be performing 3 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 18, at Forest View Educational Center Auditorium, 2121 S. Goebbert Road. The concert is part of the Arlington Heights Community Concert Association International Artists' Showcase in partnership with Northwest



Rudolf Budginas will perform Sunday, Oct. 18, in Arlington Heights.

Suburban School District 214. office or ahcommunitycon-  
 Tickets are \$25 each at the box certs.org/orderform.html.