



A Classical Pianist Explains His Faith

Eldar Nebolsin of Uzbekistan is an internationally acclaimed pianist. He has played as a soloist with orchestras in London, Moscow, St. Petersburg, New York, Paris, Rome, Sydney, Tokyo, and Vienna. Eldar grew up in the Soviet Union as an atheist. But later he concluded that humans are the work of a loving Creator. *Awake!* asked him about his music and his faith.

How did you become a musician?

My parents are both pianists. They began teaching me when I was five years old. Later, I studied at the advanced school of music in Tashkent.

Tell us about the challenges of playing with an orchestra.

No two orchestras are alike. They are like giant musical instruments that are “played” by their conductors. Perhaps the

main challenge for the soloist is to achieve balanced interaction with the conductor. It’s like a conversation between friends—rather than one always taking the lead, each should yield to the other. Usually, you have only one or two rehearsals in which to develop this rapport.

How much time do you spend practicing?

At least three hours a day—and that isn’t just to practice

difficult passages. I also study the structure of the piece I’m preparing—but without actually playing it. Another thing I do is listen to the composer’s other works, which gives me more insight into the present piece.

What would you say distinguishes a fine pianist?

His ability to make a piano “sing.” Let me explain. The piano is a kind of percussion instrument. After a note is struck, the sound can only decrease in volume—unlike that of wind instruments or the human voice, which can hold a note or even increase its volume. The challenge for pianists is to overcome the tendency of a note to fade. They do this by subtle movement of their fingers and wrists, along with the complex interaction of

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the right pedal, which extends the duration of a note and varies its timbre. When pianists master these difficult techniques, they can make the piano sound like a flute, a horn, or even an orchestra. They can also make it resemble the finest musical instrument of all—the human voice.

It's obvious that you have a deep love for music.

For me, music is the language that most directly expresses and evokes feelings that are difficult, if not impossible, to communicate in words.

What aroused your interest in spiritual matters?

Our house was always full of books, which my father brought from Moscow. A book that especially interested me contained Bible stories about the dawn of history and the experiences of the Israelites. Another book I came across was *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.* Its clear presentation of Bible teachings fascinated me. When I

moved to Spain in 1991 to study music, I took that book with me and read it several times. I discovered a faith based not merely on emotion but also on sound reasoning and convincing evidence.

A teaching that really intrigued me was the Bible's promise that humans can live forever on earth. That made so much sense! I might add that I still had not met Jehovah's Witnesses. But I resolved that when I did meet them, I would ask for Bible lessons.

How did you meet the Witnesses?

A few days after I made that mental resolution, I saw two ladies, each with a Bible in hand. 'They look like the people I've read about in my book,' I thought. 'They are preaching just as Christians did in Bible times.' Soon, I was studying the Bible with a Witness. Today, my greatest joy is helping others to learn about our Creator.

What convinced you, a former atheist, to believe in a Creator?

Music itself did. Almost everybody appreciates music, and

in a way that no animal can. Music can express joy, confidence, tenderness, and almost every other emotion. We naturally move to the rhythms in music. But is music necessary for our survival? Does it play a role in the "survival of the fittest," as evolutionists teach? I think not. In my view, it's unreasonable to conclude that the human brain, with its ability to create and appreciate music like that of Mozart and Beethoven, is the product of evolution. A far more reasonable explanation is that our brain is the product of a wise and loving Creator.

What led you to believe that the Bible is from God?

The Bible is a collection of 66 smaller books written over some 1,600 years by about 40 men. I asked myself, 'Who could have orchestrated the writing of this unified masterpiece?' The only reasonable answer is God. In my mind, the Bible is like a symphony with an elegant structure, a masterful arrangement, and a moving message for all mankind. ■

* Jehovah's Witnesses now use the Bible study aid *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* It can be accessed at www.jw.org.



MARRIAGE

Is marriage just a social union?

“What God has yoked together let no man put apart.”—Matthew 19:6.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS In God's eyes, marriage is much more than a mere social arrangement. It is a sacred union between a man and a woman. The Bible says: “From the beginning of creation ‘[God] made them male and female. On this account a man will leave his father and mother, and the two will be one flesh’ . . . Therefore *what God yoked together* let no man put apart.”*—Mark 10:6-9; Genesis 2:24.

The words, “what God yoked [or, joined] together,” do not mean that marriages are made in heaven. Rather, by pointing to our Creator as the Originator of the marriage arrangement, the Bible emphasizes the seriousness of this union. Couples who see their marriage in that light treat it as a sacred, permanent bond, thus strengthening their determination to make their marriage a success. They further increase their prospects for success when they turn to the Bible for guidance in fulfilling their respective roles as husband and wife.

* The Bible allows for divorce on the grounds of sexual infidelity.—Matthew 19:9.



What is the man's role?

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS For a family to function well, someone has to make final decisions on matters. The Bible assigns that responsibility to the husband. But that does not entitle him to be an autocrat or a bully. Nor does it allow him to shirk his responsibilities, thus eroding his wife's respect for him and imposing a needless burden upon her. Rather, God expects him to work hard to care for his wife and to assign her honor as his most intimate and trusted companion. (1 Timothy 5:8; 1 Peter 3:7) "Husbands ought to be loving their wives as their own bodies," says Ephesians 5:28.

"A husband is head of his wife."—Ephesians 5:23.

A husband who truly loves his wife values her abilities and talents and respectfully considers her views, especially on matters that may affect the family. He should not insist on his way simply because he is the family head. When the godly man Abraham rejected his wife's sound advice on a family matter, Jehovah God said to him: "Listen to her voice." (Genesis 21:9-12) Abraham humbly complied, and his family enjoyed peace and unity, as well as God's blessing.

What is the woman's role?

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS Just before creating a wife for the first man, God said: "It is not good for the man to continue by himself. I am going to make a helper for him, as a *complement* of him." (Genesis 2:18) A complement is something that completes or makes perfect. Thus, God created the woman, not to be the same as the man or to compete with him, but to be his counterpart. Together, they could fulfill their divine commission to have children and fill the earth with their own kind.—Genesis 1:28.

*"Wives, be in subjection to your own husbands."
—1 Peter 3:1.*

To enable the woman to fulfill her role, God gave her the ideal physical, mental, and emotional attributes. When she uses these wisely and lovingly, she contributes immeasurably to the success of her marriage and helps her husband feel content and emotionally secure. In God's eyes, such a fine woman is worthy of praise.*—Proverbs 31:28, 31. ■

* Couples will find many helpful suggestions on marriage and family life in the regular *Awake!* feature "Help for the Family."



Do You Have “a Feast Constantly”?

“All the days of the afflicted one are bad; but the one that is good at heart has a feast constantly.”—Proverbs 15:15.

WHAT do those words mean? They refer to one’s mental and emotional state. “The afflicted one” dwells on the negative—an outlook that makes his days “bad,” or dismal. By contrast, the one who “is good at heart” tries to focus on the positive—an attitude that fosters inner joy, giving him “a feast constantly.”

We all have problems that can rob us of a measure of happiness. Yet, we may be able to do certain things that help us to retain our joy through difficult times. Consider what the Bible says.

- Do not let anxieties over tomorrow weigh you down today. Jesus Christ said: “Do not worry about tomorrow; it will have enough worries of its own. There is no need to add to the troubles each day brings.”—[Matthew 6:34](#), *Good News Translation*.
- Try to focus on the good things that have happened to you. In fact, when you feel down, why not make a list of those good things and reflect on them? Also, do not dwell on past mistakes or bad deeds. Learn from them, and move on. Be like a driver who *glances* into his rearview mirror but does not *focus* on it. Keep in mind, too, that “there is the true forgiveness with [God].”—[Psalm 130:4](#).
- When anxieties weigh you down, confide in someone who may be able to cheer you up. “Anxious care” causes our heart “to bow down, but *the good word* is what makes it rejoice,” says [Proverbs 12:25](#). That “good word” may come from a family member or a trusted friend—someone who is not cynical or pessimistic but “is loving all the time.”—Proverbs 17:17.

The wise sayings found in the Bible have helped many to find more joy in life, even through trying times. May those precious sayings help you too. ■

