



Rena Shereshevskaya

## It's not about winning

On January 14, Shereshevskaya received the honor “Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres” by the French Ministry of Culture. With a professional background at the Moscow Conservatory and the Ippolito-Ivanov Institute, Shereshevskaya was invited to Collar International Music Festival in France in 1993 to form classes and workshops for talented young pianists. This was a pioneer's project and it took 15 years before such an initiative was introduced in France by French institutions. A Paris resident she now functions as professor at École Normale de Musique de Paris, “Alfred Cortot” and is a regular centerpiece at the Festival International de Piano La Roque d'Anthéron every summer. With such an impact it's easy to think in terms of a “magic formula”, but Shereshevskaya prefers to think in terms of creative questioning concerning the musical works, to decipher them as literature, philosophy or theatre pieces. To follow the composer's thoughts, ideas in details and to fully understand leads to a process recreating the music again together with the composer. Shereshevskaya encourages her students to do the same and when the idea – the sense of a musical work – becomes clear for them, students may have their own ideas of interpretation. She points out

Named “The Empress of the Piano” by French newspaper Le Figaro, Rena Shereshevskaya is responsible for the boost and success of the young French pianist generation. Pedagogue and coach to renowned prize-winning pianists, such as Lucas Debargue, Rémi Geniet, and the latest winner of the prestigious XVI International Tchaikovsky Competition last summer, Alexandre Kantorow, makes the world wonder about the person behind the successes.

that the teacher is for the student and not the other way around and that the student must believe in her as a musician. As a stellar pedagogue we find many of Shereshevskaya's students participating in competitions around the globe, but what really does a competition mean to the student? She says it can differ. It can be a way to win a ticket to a career, even go for prize money as sums nowadays are elevated or get a stimulus for concentrated work. There may be another approach though: not to think about the financial or career aspects but to have a desire to plunge into the culture of another country, to play as well as possible in concert halls one was dreaming about, or to get closely in touch with a competition that belongs to history. Shereshevskaya points out that a piano competition, as a competition in any other profession, requires the highest perfection. Only the aspiration to perfection and the very hard work it requires can create a real professional. The most important is to touch through your interpretation; but to achieve this the interpreter must first of all be touched by the music himself and not at all think of winning a prize.