



Ken Gorfkle (far right and below) drives the enthusiasm at his house concerts featuring virtuosos like Marc-André Hamelin (at the piano).

## THE PIANO SALON

### Chapel Hill

A LINE OF WELL-DRESSED music lovers snakes down the driveway of Ken Gorfkle's home in a wooded Chapel Hill neighborhood. In the foyer, guests remove their shoes before entering a living room with high, sloped ceilings and shelves filled with books on art, philosophy, and literature. The elephant in the room: a stunning nine-foot Bösendorfer Concert Grand piano. Nearby, world-renowned classical virtuoso pianist Marc-André Hamelin prepares to give a recital of the very same program of Scriabin, Prokofiev, Feinberg, and Schubert that he will perform later in the month at Carnegie Hall in New York City.

Ken can hardly contain his excitement. At 72, the real-estate developer has loved classical music for as long as he can remember. But when he got his Bösendorfer two years ago, he felt compelled, maybe even *called*, to share his passion. "It got delivered and I'm playing on it and I'm feeling that I need other people in the world to hear this piano. It's a work of art in every way," he says. He sought advice on booking musicians from

a professional promoter whom he'd gotten to know at events like the Southeastern Piano Festival in South Carolina. Soon, Ken was luring top musicians to his Chapel Hill Piano Salon.



Tonight, Marc-André gives an extraordinary performance, his fingers gliding over the keys like feathers lighting upon leaves of grass. Every move — his arms, his shoulders — is as graceful as a ballet dancer's. And the emotion on the faces of the people gathered around the piano is palpable. Ken sits in the front row, eyes closed during soft passages, watching with fierce concentration in moments of intensity. "It's just so intimate, and it's so personal — the music is so present," he says. And that's the way it is for everyone in

the room. At a typical music hall, the first row is several feet from the stage; in Ken's living room, the back row is a mere 17 feet away from the piano. "The farthest seat in my living room," he says, "is closer than the closest seat at Carnegie Hall."

**For information on upcoming concerts, call (336) 678-8888 or visit [chapelhillpianosalon.com](http://chapelhillpianosalon.com).**