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Astoria dojo, cellist prepare unusual combo

By Nathan Duke
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Members of Astoria's Shotojuku Dojo will perform with musician Dave Eggar at Lincoln Center's David Rubenstein Atrium. Photo courtesy Shotojuku Dojo

An acclaimed musician from Astoria and a neighborhood karate school are teaming up to present a unique performance at Manhattan's Lincoln Center in early April that will combine martial arts with classical music.

Dave Eggar, a classical cellist and pianist, will present "Balance in Two Worlds" in collaboration with Astoria's Shotojuku Dojo, at 32-48 Steinway St., at 8:30 p.m. April 8 at Lincoln Center's new David Rubenstein Atrium, which is on Broadway between 62nd and 63rd streets in Manhattan.

The event will combine music by the Dave Eggar Ensemble, which is made up of six musicians who play piano, cello, flute, percussion and bass guitar, with shotokan karate that will be performed by the dojo's master and sensei as well as six students.

The concert's music will be by Eggar, Bach, avant-garde musician George Crumb and Frederic François Chopin.

"It's a Japanese martial art that emphasizes strictly hand and feet body movement and striking," Sensei James Luk said. "One of the most special elements about it is the philosophy

we teach: seeking perfection of character, being faithful, endeavoring, respecting others and refraining from violent behavior. There's a lot of discipline that goes into it. It's not just about fighting people."

Shihan Kai Leung, who will perform demonstrations during the concert, opened the dojo on Steinway Street in Astoria 27 years ago and acts as the school's master.

The other performances will be enacted by part-time instructor Edwin Neito, students Destiny Vergara, 8; Ryu Watanabe, 11; and Marika Watanabe, 13, as well as Lara Diaz and Rahul Bhomick, both of whom are in their 20s.

The concert came about after Lincoln Center asked Eggar and his ensemble to play at its new atrium. Eggar, who is also a student at the dojo, said he thought up the concept of combining his music with karate moves.

"I took martial arts growing up, but stopped out of a fear of injuring my hands," said Eggar, who has been playing the cello and piano since age 3 as well as performed on Broadway with the Metropolitan Opera at age 7 and at Carnegie Hall at age 15. "But I've gotten back into it during the last few years. I was struck by how unique and fascinating it would be to juxtapose music and martial arts. There are so many interesting similarities."

Shotokan is the most popular style of karate practiced around the world. It emphasizes rigorous physical training and striking techniques with the arm, leg blocks, evasions and strong offense as a defense. The practice was influenced by earlier forms of Chinese martial arts.

There will be free admission to the event, but seating will be limited and on a first-

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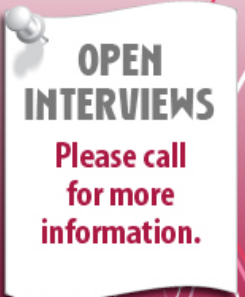
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