



Katya Grineva will play her dream piano this week at Carnegie Hall

A little romance & a Steinway

By BARBARA HOFFMAN

WHEN you're billed as "the Romantic pianist," it's only fair you'd fall in love with ... a piano.

"By chance, I walked into a piano store after rehearsal last week and saw it," says Katya Grineva. "Such a beautiful piano! I tried it, and it had this incredible, round sound, like Vladimir Horowitz's ... like a soul."

There was one catch: the 9-foot, 1881 mahogany Steinway grand had just been sold. Not that Grineva, who lives in a studio walk-up barely big enough to hold her baby grand, could afford such a thing.

But Wednesday night, when she performs at Carnegie Hall, she'll get to play the piano of her dreams — thanks to a little intervention from the shop owner, who's shipping it to Carnegie for the occasion.

"He said the owner wouldn't mind," she says happily. "Such a beautiful piano!"

For her third Carnegie Hall appearance, the Moscow-born pianist will perform Schubert, Liszt, Ravel and Chopin — romantic composers all. She'll also play a world premiere of "Valse de Songes" (Dream Waltz), by 24-year-old Parisian composer Laurent Cousson.

"It doesn't sound contemporary at

all," she says. "Just jazzy and Parisian ... and romantic."

Like many of her concerts, this one will benefit a cause; part of the proceeds will go to the Glaucoma Foundation. In the past, Grineva has raised money for the ASPCA and for the last three years, she's performed at the NYPD's memorial breakfast for the families of fallen officers.

"I love it here," says Grineva, who left Russia 11 years ago on a student visa and decided to stay. "And I feel it's my destiny to play this music."

■ *Katya Grineva performs 8 p.m. Wednesday at Carnegie Hall. For tickets, \$19 to \$67, call (212) 247-7800.*