

A PAIR TO DRAW YOU IN

Lighting up the dark

Dan Romer, 24, knows what's good about moving back into the basement of his parents' home in Brooklyn after several years away at college: "I just woke up," Romer says at about 1 p.m. He's standing in his backyard amid beer bottles from a week ago, lighting a cigarette. Though he does his own laundry, "I can still sneak upstairs and steal food," he says.

The musician says he loves the vibe of Brooklyn right now. "To the left of my

house is a deejay, and to the right is a drummer," says Romer, whose new CD, "Two New Sciences!" is just out. It's inspired by some of his musical touchstones, like David Bowie's "The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders From Mars" and the Who's "Tommy."

His band, Fire Flies, is in the midst of performing in the city. The band, including Wil Farr on guitars, has been building a fan base by playing anywhere and everywhere in New York. It's something Romer's been working toward all his life.

At 16, he was signed by Sony, and did a demo for them. That same year he won a Scholastic songwriting competition named after John Lennon.

Now he's playing in the town where he can bump into one of his influences. "I saw David Byrne riding on his bike one time, and one of my friends screamed out, 'David! David!' and he pulled over," says Romer. "Everyone else said something cool and I just said, '...You're my idol.' He didn't know what to say. I think I made him nervous."

Michael Giltz

(Sept. 7 and 14, *Crash Mansion*, 199

A jazz kid grows up

Eldar is settling into a six-night stand at the Blue Note starting Aug. 28 just as he's settling into a new apartment in Morning-side Heights.

"I've got a great view," says Eldar. "I'm not looking at a wall."

Limitless horizons have seemed to always be ahead of this accomplished 20-year-old pianist. At 10, his family moved from Kyrgyzstan in the Soviet Union to Kansas City so Eldar — clearly a child prodigy — could pursue his studies. Later he moved to L.A. and now New York, all while recording three albums for Sony Masterworks, two dominated by standards (including 2006's "Live at the Blue Note") and now "Re-Imagination," his boldest effort yet.

"We wanted it to be not just a snapshot of a moment but to tell more of a story, not just a live jazz recording," says Eldar, whose liner notes reveal that tunes like "South Bixel" are rooted in his memories of Los Angeles and his childhood in Kansas City. "It's definitely a personal record."

With DJ Logic guesting on turntable on several tunes, it's also the furthest from



RAHAV SEGEV

young, Eldar's a bit wary of being tagged as having everything handed to him. On the other hand, he doesn't like to linger on the years of risk and sacrifice he and his family endured to get to this point.

"Most of the time I don't like to really talk about it," says Eldar, whose last name is Djangirov. "I want to tell people about music, about the good things. I'm blessed to have the best parents I could hope to have.... There were a lot of different holes I could have stepped in."

M.G.

(Aug. 28 through Sept. 2, *The Blue Note*, 121 W Third St • 212.475.8502)

