



Rock & droll: Rudolf Budginas

CLASSICAL

FROM BORGE TO BUDGINAS

He's been described as a classical version of Jon Brion, but I'd call him today's version of Victor Borge. Watching Lithuanian-born concert pianist **Rudolf Budginas** in action recalls those halcyon days when audiences rolled in the aisles to Borge's droll antics, which never got old, even when the Great Dane did. Just before his death at 91, Borge's classic routines were still hilarious, and one hopes his young successor will have as long a run. The astonishingly talented Budginas, who as a kiddie prodigy studied at the Moscow Conservatory, rolls into So-Cal this week as part of a marathon 82-city, 32-state U.S. tour. He'll take his audience on a wild ride through the classical, pop, jazz, country and other musical worlds, combining "serious" piano with funny stories about his childhood; a souped-up version of Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata*; commentary on Johnny Cash's "I Walk the Line"; and a couple of his specialties: pop/jazz/ragtime versions of Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody No. 5 and Bizet's *Carmen*, which feature a rollicking band of irreverent instrumental-

ists. *Redondo Beach Performing Arts Center, 125 S. Hutchins St., Redondo Beach; Tues., Jan. 5, 7:30 p.m.; call for ticket prices. (310) 937-6607. —Mary Beth Crain*

TAILGATE

THE BIG GAME'S IN TWO DAYS!

The official tailgate party event for the National Championship game is Thursday, Jan. 7, at the Rose Bowl, costs \$30 and features the Goo Goo Dolls. But why wait till Game Day to get good and fired up about the Big Game? *Pasadena Magazine* presents **Countdown to Kickoff**. With '70s funky time-trippers Boogie Knights, you're in good hands. The band are professionals when it comes to getting the crowd excited, and have years of corporate-gig experience getting fists pumped for Old Navy and Pizza Hut. And really, nothing gets you in the mood for college football better than men in afro wigs performing Village People hits. (P.S. Does anyone know who's playing in the Big Game?) *Paseo Colorado, 280 Colorado Blvd., Pasadena; Tues., Jan. 5, 6-10 p.m.; \$15. (866) 469-1281. —L.M.*