

The EStrella Piano Duo



The [EStrella Piano Duo](#) burst onto the musical scene in 2011 with a series of concerts celebrating the great Russian masterpieces for piano duet. Their first performance evoked raves of “technical brilliance” and “infectious joy in music making”. The second drew a standing-room-only crowd. Since then, they have performed widely to enthusiastic audiences and critical acclaim. The 2015-16 concert season alone took the Duo to six states plus the District of Columbia in the US and to several cities in China. 2017 featured both a Canadian and an orchestral debut. In 2018 the Duo was awarded a Global Music Award Silver medal for their critically acclaimed new CD, *Tales from the East*, featuring stories of adventure, magic and romance by Russian composers. EStrellas's upcoming year will again take the Duo all over the United States, with numerous repeat engagements.

The Duo's repertoire includes, besides the usual favorites, many rarely-heard, fascinating works that most duos fear to touch. Their programs are always musically profound, but also virtuosic, often acrobatic, and occasionally humorous, always with introductions which draw the listeners into the music.

[Elena Doubrovitskaya](#) and [Svetlana Belsky](#) are accomplished pianists in their own right. Between the two, they have been heard throughout Europe, Asia and the United States. Their concert credits include Carnegie (Weill) Hall, Kiev Philharmonic Hall, Chicago Symphony Center, St. Petersburg Rimsky-Korsakoff Museum, Baptist University of Hong Kong, Ravinia and Tanglewood Music Festivals, among many others. Critics praise them for “marvelous and extraordinary playing” and “confidence and élan”. Elena and Svetlana are also accomplished teachers, who enjoy sharing their love for music with new generations of pianists.

For Engagements: 1-847-302-8610 or estrelladuo1@gmail.com

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A native of Russia, **Elena Doubovitskaya** performed her debut recital in Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall as part of Artists International Presentations, followed by numerous engagements in United States, Germany, Austria, Czech Republic and Russia. Dr. Doubovitskaya's accomplishments include awards from Artists International Presentations, the Seattle International Piano Competition and the Ibla Grand Prize Competition. She has performed at the Tanglewood Music Festival, Prague International Piano Master Classes and East-West Music Festival in Germany, among others, and has participated in master classes with Emanuel Ax, James Levine, Leif Ove Andsnes, Garrick Ohlsson, and Menahem Pressler. Dr. Doubovitskaya received her undergraduate degree from the Ural State "Mussorgsky" Conservatory in Ekaterinburg, Russia, followed by a Master's Degree from the Manhattan School of Music under Solomon Mikowsky and a Doctorate Degree in Piano Performance from Northwestern University

under Ursula Oppens. Currently Dr. Doubovitskaya is a member of the piano and chamber music faculty at the Merit School of Music in Chicago, and serves as the Chairman of its Piano Department.

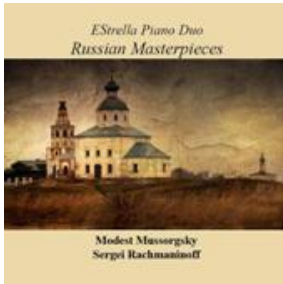
Critically acclaimed as "a passionate pianist and scholar", **Svetlana Belsky** is an in-demand recitalist and chamber pianist, noted for her remarkable rapport with audiences and stylistic versatility. She has appeared in the Ukraine, Russia, Poland, Italy, China, Taiwan and Hong Kong, and throughout the United States. Her performance credits include Carnegie Recital Hall, Kiev Philharmonic Hall, Dame Myra Hess Series, Music in the Loft, countless university concert series, live recitals on Chicago's WFMT and New York's WQXR, and guest appearances with the University of Chicago Symphony, Southern Illinois Symphony, Chicago Chamber Orchestra and the Tutti Orchestra. Dr. Belsky has received awards both for her performances in international piano competitions, and for her advocacy of new American music. Her recordings have been heard on radio stations worldwide. Her annotated translation of *Busoni as Pianist* has been featured on BBC Radio 3. Following emigration from the Soviet Union, Dr. Belsky studied with Emilio Del Rosario in Chicago. She earned her Bachelor of Music summa cum laude and Master's degrees from the Peabody Conservatory of Music, studying with Ann Schein. Later, she earned her Doctorate in Performance at the Manhattan School of Music, working with Nina Svetlanova



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Discography



[Russian Masterpieces: Rachmaninoff and Mussorgsky](#)

Modest Mussorgsky, *The Hut of Baba Yaga* and *The Great Gate of Kiev* from *Pictures at an Exhibition*, (arranged by Catherine McMichael for two pianos)

Sergei Rachmaninoff, *Vocalise* (arranged by Greg Anderson for piano four hands), and *Suite No. 2*, Op. 17 for Two Pianos



[Tales from the East: Stories of Adventure, Magic and Romance by Russian Composers](#)

Igor Stravinsky, Three Movements from *Petrushka* (arranged by Victor Babin for two pianos)

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, *Scheherazade* (arranged by EStrella Duo for two pianos)

Alexander Borodin, *Polovetsian Dances* from the opera *Prince Igor* (arranged by Victor Babin for two pianos)

Adolf Gottlieb, *Suite-Fantasy* on Sergei Prokofiev's ballet *Cinderella*

On Video



<https://www.youtube.com/user/EStrellaPianoDuo>



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Sample Programs Available for 2019-2021

- **Tales from the East** (two pianos or one piano-four hands). Transcriptions of beloved works such as *Scheherazade* and *Polovetsian Dances*, along with other works by Rachmaninoff, Tchaikovsky, Prokofiev and Stravinsky
- **Russian Favorites** (two pianos). The magnificent Suite No. 2 by Rachmaninoff, settings of Rachmaninoff's Songs, *Pictures at an Exhibition* and more
- **A Celebration of the Waltz** (for one piano four hands or two pianos). Ravel's *La Valse* opens with a vision of tragedy, and an uproarious and acrobatic setting of *The Blue Danube Waltzes* by Greg Anderson lightens the mood
- **Shall We Dance?** (one piano/four hands). Dance music from Bach to Khatchaturian, featuring well-known original masterpieces and interesting transcriptions
- **Mozart and Friends** (two pianos). Starting with Mozart's great Sonata for Two pianos, this program moves on to variations, transcriptions and paraphrases by other composers ranging from the serious to the *Ragtime a la Turca* by Greg Anderson
- **The Rite of Spring** (one piano). Stravinsky's piano duet setting is often performed on two pianos, but the EStrella Duo showcases the far more difficult original one piano version
- **Music by French and German composers** (for one piano). Works by Debussy, Ravel, Bach, Mozart, Beethoven and Mendelssohn

These programs may of course be combined in any way that best suits the venue and the audience.

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“awesome”

“Anyone who thinks classical music is boring needs to check out Tales From the East, a collection of dramatic piano duets by Russian composers performed by the EStrella Piano Duo. Overflows with joyous energy and dazzling piano technique. Awesome in the truest sense of the word!”

-Kathy Parsons, Mainly Piano Album Review

“extraordinary performance”

“Music lovers of Yangzhou got a real treat from EStrella Piano Duo this evening. It was an extraordinary performance of unusual precision that rocked the concert hall.”

-Music Review, Yangzhou Evening News, China

...“breathtaking”

“We concluded our very successful 2013/14 classical concert season on Sunday, May 18, with the magnificent EStrella Piano Duo. Their breathtaking performance in our hall, including the very personal introductions of each piece by Svetlana, certainly kept me in thrall.”

-Hardy von Auenmueller, Music Director, German Society of Philadelphia

...“charged”

“Duo-pianists Elena Doubovitskaya and Svetlana Belsky offered a muscular and charged Rite of Spring. The event was a two-piece, multi-disciplinary performance with dance at the heart... always engaging, sometimes inventive, and in some perfectly timed moments, stunningly beautiful.”

-M. L. Rantala, Classical Music Critic, the Hyde Park Herald

...“infectious joy”

“The EStrella Piano Duo's performance of Rachmaninov's 2nd Suite was a pleasure to hear – it combined technical brilliance with uncanny coordination, and an infectious joy in music-making.”

-Timothy Riordan, Artistic Director, Merit School of Music, Chicago

...“obvious skill, talent and musicianship”

“The response to your performance was positive in every respect: your choice of music, its execution and interpretation and the obvious skill, talent and musicianship you both possess. I hope we can arrange for a repeat visit in the future.”

Gloria Cook, Director, Meadow Lakes Community Concerts, NJ

...“stunning virtuosity”

“The EStrella Piano Duo possesses a stunning virtuosity that makes their Russian repertory leap from the page. I feel the audience truly connected with their performance through their captivating musicianship.”

-Steve Gianni, Artistic Director, Two-Piano Festival, Northbrook Public Library, IL

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The EStrella Piano Duo

Mainly Piano

Album Review: Tales From the East

Review by Kathy Parsons (December 20, 2018)

Anyone who thinks classical music is boring needs to check out *Tales From the East*, a collection of dramatic piano duets by Russian composers performed by the EStrella Piano Duo. (If you still aren't convinced, take a look at some of their YouTube videos!) The Duo is Svetlana Belsky and Elena Doubovitskaya, both extraordinary pianists and teachers. Dr. Belsky is Head of the Piano Department at the University of Chicago and Dr. Doubovitskaya is Chair of the Piano Department at The Merit School of Music, also in Chicago. They began performing together in 2011 with a series of concerts that celebrated the great Russian masterpieces for piano duet. They have since performed all over the US, Canada, Asia and Europe to rave reviews. This is their second album, following their 2013 debut, *Russian Masterpieces*. Both artists are also members of the award-winning multi-piano ensemble, *Pianissimo!*, which was established in 2014. From the liner notes of *Tales From the East*: "The Duo's repertoire includes, besides the usual favorites, many rarely-heard, fascinating works that most duos fear to touch. Their programs are always musically profound, but also virtuosic, often acrobatic, and occasionally humorous."

Tales From the East begins with three movements from *Petrushka* by Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) arranged for two pianos by V. Babin. The first is "Danse russe" (Russian Dance), a wildly energetic piece that will be familiar to most listeners from its use in other media. The second movement is "Chez Petrouchka" (*Petrushka's Room*), an intricate and dazzling expression of many moods and a variety of thoughts. The third is "La semaine grasse" (The Shrovetide Fair), a 10-minute tour de force that is often playful and carefree with varying degrees of intensity. I'd love to see this one played live!

Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908) is represented with the epic "Festival in Bagdad" from *Scheherazade*. Many themes from this work will also be familiar to most listeners even if they have never studied classical music. Dramatic, intense and extremely flashy, I'd love to see this one played live, too!

The next four tracks are movements from Alexander Borodin's (1833-87) *Polovetsian Dances* from *Prince Igor*. The first is the "Andantino," made famous as "Stranger in Paradise" from the musical *Kismet*. "Allegro Vivo" is just that - a lively dance that flies all over the piano keyboard(s) with wild abandon. "Allegro" is often used in films and cartoons as a dramatic depiction of struggles against huge (if not impossible) odds. Dark and intense with an underlying sense of fun, it's a great arrangement! "Presto" may not be quite as familiar, but overflows with joyous energy and dazzling piano technique. Themes from the "Andantino" movement are also reintroduced in a variety of variations. Awesome in the truest sense of the word!

The last track is "Suite-Fantasy on Prokofiev's *Cinderella*," an epic work at just a hair under 14 minutes. While this piece has plenty of bold, intricate passages, it also gives the EStrella Duo a chance to show their more tender, lyrical side. I have no doubt that Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953) would be more than proud of this arrangement and performance of his music!

I am so excited to have been introduced to the EStrella Duo and look forward to future releases and (hopefully!!!) a chance to see them perform live! Brava!!!

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联系电话: 87963606 邮箱: yzw@126.com

B1 文娱新闻

WENYUXINWEN

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本报特别策划

由桐华小说改编的《那片星空那片海》正式开机, 郭碧婷、郭晓峰等演员现身开机现场, 之前所传的此刻的男主角将峰片来现身。

“欧美音乐汇”上演第二场 昨晚, 双钢琴联奏震撼全场

两个人, 两台琴, 默契的配合达到琴人合一。昨晚, 由扬州市文广新局、扬州晚报主办的“欧美音乐汇”在市音乐厅精彩上演, 来自美国的两对女钢琴家献艺, 奏响“埃斯特莱拉”双钢琴音乐会。

美国钢琴演奏家 赞扬州就像大花园

昨晚的演奏嘉宾分别是埃琳娜·杜宝维斯卡和斯韦特兰娜·贝尔斯基, 均是多才多艺的演奏家, 享誉欧洲、亚洲, 曾于卡内基(威尔)馆、爱乐音乐厅、圣彼得堡里姆斯基·科萨科夫音乐厅、柏林爱乐音乐厅等演出。评论家称赞她们“技巧和非凡的演奏”和“富有信心和锐利”。同时两对也是非常成功的教师, 喜欢与新一代的钢琴家分享她们对音乐的爱好。

埃琳娜将首次中国行献给了扬州, 斯韦特兰娜之前来过中国, 但扬州也是第一次来。昨天上午, 两人在没有翻译的陪同下游览了瘦西湖, 扬州的美景和美食都给她们留下深刻的印象, “扬州

州是一座很安静的城市, 空气很清新, 景色也非常美, 我一直在拍照, 拍了无数的照片。”斯韦特兰娜告诉记者, 由于人生地不熟, 语言又不通, 两人在游玩的过程中常常迷路, 热情的扬州人一次又一次帮助她们, 令她们很感动。

“这是我第一次来中国, 扬州就像一座大花园, 我真的非常喜欢这里。”埃琳娜说。

双钢琴 四重奏 演绎多首名家曲目

钢琴以其宽广的音域和动人的音色被誉为“乐器之王”。钢琴独奏是非常熟悉的演奏形式, 然而, 一场音乐会上, 两个人、两台琴的形式却是难得一见。

双钢琴演奏除了考验钢琴家的演奏水平, 更需要两位默契的配合。埃琳娜和斯韦特兰娜两人在私下关系密切, 合作4年至今保持每月一到两次的练习, 默契程度非常高。

音乐会分上下两场, 上半场是四手联弹。四手联弹, 对音乐表现能力和理解能力方面的要求



音乐会现场

具有重要作用。两人带来的四首作品都是经典之作, 无论是充满伤感的拉赫玛尼诺夫《练声曲》, 还是悠远宽广的天籁之声《毡帽舞曲》, 新颖的演奏方式, 让观众体验到不同的视听感受。

下半场则是双钢琴演奏。值得一提的是, 她们还专门为扬州市民准备了中国作品《黄河颂》。优美的旋律、完美的配合, 音乐会给现场观众奉献了一场高水准的听觉盛宴。

记者 车林

The EStrella Piano Duo



The German Society of Pennsylvania

We concluded our very successful 2013/14 classical concert season on Sunday, May 18, with the magnificent EStrella Piano Duo – comprised of two Soviet émigrés, Elena Doubovitskaya

and Svetlana Belsky, who currently live in Chicago. Three years ago, they burst on the musical scene with a series of Russian masterpieces for four hands. Their breathtaking performance in our hall, including the very personal introductions of each piece by Svetlana, certainly kept me in thrall.

The program was an extraordinary rendition of the Russian soul contained in the composer's music. It opened with Greg Anderson's fascinating transcription of Sergei Rachmaninoff's Vocalise. Apart from its obvious attraction of soulful melody, this work showcased the performers' ability to coordinate and choreograph their motions and to breathe in perfect unison.

Next, the Polovestian Dances (from Borodin's opera Prince Igor) presented more unforgettable melodies, and grew in energy to a rousing finale. Pianistic fireworks abounded in Stravinsky's Rite of Spring in EStrella's version of the composer's transcription for four hands. In the ballet, you could hear young men strut and thump, the girls glide and enchant. The pianists' hands produced orchestral sonorities while preforming acrobatics on the keyboard. A different and lovelier version of Spring was seen in the "March", "April" and "May" movements of Tchaikovsky's Seasons, with their entrancing Russian melodies, gentle colors and evanescent moods.

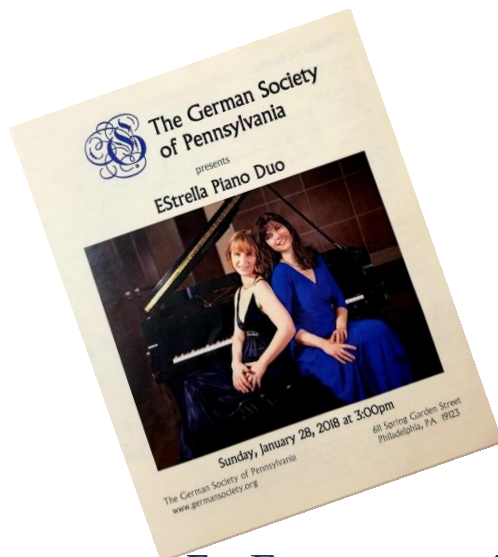
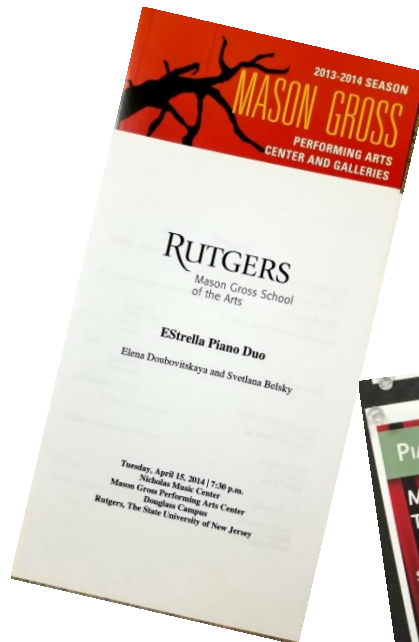
The pre-intermission part of the concert concluded with another Stravinsky masterpiece, Petrushka. Again, the duo delighted in the bright, almost harsh colors of the music, its driving energy and technical brilliance.

The second half opened with the final movement of Rimsky-Korsakov's Scheherazade. Who needs an orchestra when you have twenty (20) fingers like these? The EStrella duo delighted in the sensuality, rich color palette and profound beauty of the score. Another offering from Rachmaninoff, this time a set of the original works from Opus 11 for piano duo changed the mood to quiet contemplation that grew into passion, and allowed the duo to showcase yet another side of their musical personality. Good humor and amiable enjoyment prevail in the works by a lesser known Russian composer, Valery Gavrilin. Clever pianistic effects, gentle irony, and glorious Russian melodiousness were heard throughout.

The concert came to an uproarious conclusion with Greg Anderson's irreverent (some might say insane) fantasy on Johann Strauss' Blue Danube Waltz. The four hands of the pianists imitated four dancing feet, and the pianists had to do their utmost to avoid tripping on one another's fingers, elbows, arms and even hair, while creating an ever-changing vision of Viennese waltz – from grand, to tender, to maniacal. The technical and musical requirements of the piece are such that only a select few of duos dare to attempt it. The result was a performance that needed to be seen, and did not fail to bring the audience to its feet!

Hardy von Auenmueller
Senior Vice President

The EStrella Piano Duo



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