

OKSANA

A MUSICAL MASTERPIECE

BY JENNY WERTH

Oksana's fingers caress the keyboard; then rapidly pound on it, only to moments later delicately touch the keys once more. She releases the music's energy on the piano's keys with a presence that transfers from extremely hot to tragically cold. It's likely she doesn't even notice her transformation as she swifts and sways through the uproar and the delicacy of the piece. It's like watching someone making love to the beauty of the music without leaving their chair. Her connection to the music is that intense. It's as though the piano is an extension of Oksana's arms, as if a piano was in the room when she was born; impatiently waiting for her to make it her own. The piano is victorious; it has a lifetime of music for Oksana to release. Just when you think you're safe from emotion; perhaps even devoid of its depth, the universal language of music is reverberated into your heart straight from the soul of this pianist protégé.

Oksana Kolesnikova can play a thousand songs... anything from Beethoven to the Beatles; Mozart to Madonna; Chopin to Clapton. With long blonde hair and porcelain skin, the musical aficionada not only commands attention for her music; but from her ethereal beauty alike. The combination results in an audience who finds themselves on a harrowing journey as Oksana performs another masterpiece. Regardless of your background, her music will touch you. The melodies take people out of the slums and into the symphony; away from the war and into comforting peace; far away from freezing and into a fire of warmth. Oksana was freed from any limitations from her home-town of Siberia to find profound liberation on a piano's keys. She is forever grateful to her parents who noticed her interest in the piano and signed her up for music lessons. She was five-years-old, and it was an opportunity that would forever change the course of her life.

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“I was always drawn to the piano, my mom (a teacher) used to take me to work and I would hang out there with her students... and there was a piano there.”

Not long after, Oksana and her parents moved to neighboring Kazakhstan where Oksana continued music lessons with various professors whom she credits for displaying a genuine love for the instrument. Their collective adoration only enhanced her ever-growing passion for the piano. Oksana found refuge by expressing herself in her impassioned melodies while living under the harshness of the USSR. Each key she touched took her a heartbeat closer to the possibilities awaiting her in America; although she had no idea it was America that she'd eventually call home. “America was this dream land that was so unattainable,” Oksana remembers. “And whatever I could do... just to live there was enough.” But, she would do far more than simply live in America... she would revolutionize it, one stroke of the piano at a time. With each completed musical achievement, she became a thousand miles closer to a destiny of unimaginable success.

With every award honored, another oceans-length journey toward accomplished performer, and eventually teacher of her treasured art. Finally, in a fashion reminiscent of a Hollywood-movie, Oksana and her family moved to Florida. They were the lucky recipients of winning a much-coveted green card lottery making their wildest dreams a reality. And from the shores of Florida's white sands, Oksana throttled head-on into the world of fierce American competition; winning every time. “I don't let competition discourage me because it's everywhere you go... I get inspired by the competition and become better and bigger.” That much is crystal clear.

Indeed, the little girl from Siberia was granted a full scholarship to Florida State University where she studied piano performance and soon after packed up to move to Los Angeles where the competition





PHOTO: KIM LEE

was even more intense. Only this time, she had her soul-mate, her Italian-born husband Alex. The duo took on Hollywood together in a fashion only immigrated transplants can do: with fervor. Within a year, they made considerable footprints along the streets of a town known as Beverly Hills. And by 2008, Oksana was playing in the world-renowned Beverly Hills Hotel's Polo Lounge to the enjoyment of every A-lister, celebrity, VIP and friends. Suddenly, the city of fairytales and place of impossible-dreams became Oksana's very own backyard. For seven years, Oksana entertained ladies-who-lunch with grace, charm and incredible talent. Within the famous Polo Lounge's eloquent tables, fine china, polished silverware and fresh flowers, Oksana met super-stars such as Sir Elton John. In fact, as fate would have it, Oksana was playing Elton John's "Your Song" when he happened to walk in for lunch one day. He sang her praises and she ended her set with "Sorry Seems To Be The Hardest Word" to which John told her "you play wonderfully my love." Experiences like these only confirmed that Oksana's future would be no less than dazzling.

"As a little girl in Siberia, I could never have dreamed I would be in Beverly Hills playing for the celebrities I saw on TV. I never would have thought it possible." But stardom has no limits.

Naturally, her years in The Polo Lounge catapulted her from pianist protégé to pianist in-demand in Los Angeles and beyond.

She's recorded seven CDs, appeared in every major TV network, played in several world tours, symphonies and charitable events making her a common house-hold name. "It's constant love and passion for music, because I would never be where I was today if it wasn't for music."

As a result of her many accomplishments, she moved on to opening a music school in Beverly Hills called 'Oksana School of Music.' A teacher at heart, she now has a successful school that teaches celebrities such as Grammy award-winner Kenny 'Babyface' Edmonds, mega hit-maker Toby Gad, The Amazing Race TV producers Elise Doganieri and Bertram Van Munster and many others. And the school's reputation is spreading at a rate as fast as Oksana's fingers can tantalize the piano they touch. Just weeks ago, Oksana gave Kim Kardashian her first piano lesson. "It was a great experience teaching Kim. She's a bright student and I was impressed at how quickly she grasped the material."

Oksana offers a proven method of coaching that achieves incredible results without spending years to learn. "Why waste too much of your precious time when you can go directly to the stuff you love (to play)." One of her students even learned to play Chopin's dramatic "Nocturne" in just ten private lessons. See, Oksana's method produces the results a student desires. That's why their school's mission statement reads "Accomplishment is

Never Quitting." Indeed, it's most probable the word "quit" is not even in Oksana's vocabulary.

"You go where your passion is, I think that's the end reward. If you don't settle for anything less, and you go through your journey, you end up succeeding..."

With music in her bones, Oksana doesn't remember a time when the piano wasn't a constant companion. "(Music) was such a big part of our lives....In Siberia we didn't have a TV and it was always too cold to go outside and play, and so the piano was a place to entertain yourself and your family and friends. Since the day you're born, you're exposed to some kind of music."

The stories of our lives are often remembered by the music playing while the memories are being created. And if Oksana had to relate this into an original composition, it would demand the purest of gold.

Oksana School of Music was the 2013 winner of the prestigious Best of Beverly Hills Business Award. For more information on school and their services please visit www.oksanaschoolofmusic.com. You'll find a plethora of Oksana's music and concerts on YouTube at www.youtube.com/oksanabella. Each of her performances are hypnotizing... it's without surprise that she has well over one-million visitors.



PHOTO: LAURA TAYLOR