

Biography of Irina Chukovskaya (Petrova) 2025 (1)

Irina Chukovskaya is an internationally acclaimed pianist and teacher with over 30 years of piano performing and teaching experience, touring extensively throughout the world and collaborating with distinguished conductors and soloists. She is a prizewinner of numerous international piano competitions, including the Frederic Chopin International Piano Competition in Warsaw, Poland, in 1980 (under the name Irina Petrova). Currently, she teaches in Japan as a visiting professor at Aichi University of the Arts.

Irina is recognized for her outstanding performances in the Romantic style of music and has achieved success as a prizewinner in various international piano competitions. She has also established herself as an exceptional performer of modern piano music, showcasing works by composers such as Dmitri Shostakovich, Mikhail Kollontay, Galina Ustvolskaya, and Mieczysław Weinberg. In 1991, Mstislav Rostropovich described her playing as “remarkable for its virtuosity, sound musicianship, and true artistry. She performs music of different styles.”

Irina has performed in solo recitals and with chamber ensembles throughout the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Poland, Italy, the UK, Israel, South Korea, Greece, Hungary, Taiwan, the United States, and Canada. She has graced the stages of prestigious concert venues, including the Great and Small Halls of the Moscow Conservatory, the Tchaikovsky Concert Hall, the Great Hall of the Budapest Conservatory, the Great Hall of the St. Petersburg Philharmonia, Palais Montcalm Concert Hall (Quebec, Canada), Megaron Hall (Athens, Greece), Weill Recital Hall, CAMI Hall (New York, USA), Denki Bunka Kaikan (Japan), and many others.

She has collaborated with notable conductors, including Yuri Simonov (Russia), Maxim Shostakovich (USA), Vakhtang Jordania (USA), Kazuhiko Komatsu (Japan), Pierre-Dominique Ponnelle (Germany), David Gilbert (USA), Janusz Kacz (Hungary), Vladimir Ponkin (Russia), Sergei Skripka (Russia), Beatrice Brown (USA), and many others.

A masterful collaborator, Irina has worked with the Shostakovich Quartet, cellists Victor Spiller, Mariya Tchaikovskaya, Ksenija Jankovic, Kate Dillingham, Maya Beiser, and the famous soprano Galina Pisarenko, among others.

Past festival highlights include Caramoor (USA), Kristianstad (Sweden), “Patras – Cultural Capital of Europe” (Greece), the Russian Music Festival (Quebec, Canada), “Pokrov’s Autumn” (Novosibirsk, Russia), “Moscow – to European Cities,” “December Evenings,” the Andrey Sakharov International Art Festival (Nizhny Novgorod, Russia), the International Music Festival named after V. Gavrillin (Vologda, Russia), the International Rachmaninov Music Festival (Tambov, Russia), the International Musical Festival named after I. Sollertinsky (Vitebsk, Belarus), the Festival named after Heinrich and Stanislaw Neuhaus (Moscow, Russia), and many others.

Irina has earned a reputation as a perceptive musician, passionately interpreting a wide range of composers from J.S. Bach to Dmitri Shostakovich and Mikhail Kollontay. Her extensive repertoire encompasses forty concertos with orchestra. Her playing is characterized by vivid expressiveness, a rich palette of tone colors, and delicate pianism.

Irina has recorded five CDs featuring works by Chopin, Schumann, Schubert, Shostakovich, and Kollontay. She recently completed the recording of Chopin's Complete Mazurkas at the Kawai Studio in Hamamatsu, Japan. The CD set is scheduled for release in September 2025.

In 1989, Irina moved to the United States, where her artistic career flourished. She worked as a soloist under "Community Concerts," a division of Columbia Artists Management. In March 1991, she performed with the New Orleans Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Maxim Shostakovich, receiving critical acclaim. During her time in the United States, Irina performed in over half of the 50 states, both in solo recitals and with orchestras.

Due to family reasons, Irina returned to Russia, where she embarked on a successful teaching career and continued performing. She shared her expertise at esteemed institutions, including the Moscow Conservatory, where she served as an assistant to Professor Naumov. She also maintained her own class at the Russian Gnesins Academy of Music. Her dedication and contributions led to her appointment as a professor in 2014.

Irina's teaching reputation extends to Japan, where she has held the position of visiting professor at Aichi University of the Arts since 2019.

Irina has been giving masterclasses in the USA, South Korea, Hong Kong, Montenegro, Serbia, Greece, Italy, the UK, and various other countries.

In 1980, Ms. Chukovskaya gained recognition as a prizewinner in the Frederic Chopin International Piano Competition in Warsaw, Poland (under the name Irina Petrova) and was subsequently invited to perform concerts worldwide alongside other winners. However, the Soviet Ministry of Cultural Affairs did not permit her to stay in Poland and continue performing with other prizewinners. Consequently, Irina had to return to Moscow immediately. Despite receiving numerous invitations to perform in Europe and Japan, she was denied permission to leave the country.

From 1980 to 1989, Irina conducted over 400 concerts in major cities of the USSR, including Moscow, Leningrad, Sverdlovsk, Odessa, Tashkent, and others. It was only in the late 1980s that Irina gained the ability to perform internationally.

Irina was born in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, in 1958 and began her piano studies at the age of six with the legendary teacher Tamara Popovich at the Central Music School of the Tashkent Conservatory. At seven, she toured Uzbekistan, performing Haydn's D Major Concerto with the Tashkent Philharmonic Orchestra. She gave her first full recital at the age of thirteen.

Irina was born into a family of musicians. Her mother, a violinist with the Tashkent Opera and Ballet Theater, exposed her to a rich musical environment from an early age.

She continued her studies at Moscow's Central Music School and later at the Tchaikovsky Conservatory under Vera Gornostaeva and Stanislav Neuhaus. Irina completed her postgraduate

studies with Dmitry Bashkirov and also studied with Theodore Lettvin at Rutgers University in the United States (1990–1993).

In 2014, Irina Chukovskaya won the First Prize in the International Competition “The 21st Century Art” (Lempäälä, Finland), the Grand Prix at the II International Master Competition for Music Teachers (Warsaw, Poland), and the Grand Prix at the XV International Festival-Competition “Musica Classica” (Ruza, Russia).