

Meet the Artists



Irina Kats

Pianist Irina Kats is a teacher, soloist, chamber musician and accompanist. According to The Washington Post, she is a "splendidly able accompanist" with "considerable emotional powers." Ms. Kats' career began in her native Russia, where she graduated with honors, studying with the great Vasily Pavlov of the Astrakhan and Kazan state conservatories.

Ms. Kats joined the Levine School of Music piano faculty in 1998 and resumed her performance career as a chamber musician and accompanist, performing throughout the Northeast. She has collaborated with such musicians as Slovakian sopranos Eva Blagove and Sisa Sclovsk, cellist John Gevorkian, horn soloist Eric Rusk and baritone Jerome Barry in such venues as the Austrian Slovakian Embassies, The Lyceum in Alexandria, Va., and the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

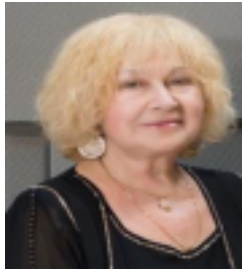


Dasha Gabay

Pianist Dasha Gabay earned her Bachelor's Degree from the M. Mussorgsky Music College in St. Petersburg, Russia, then went on to study directing at the St. Petersburg Cultural Institute, followed by the St. Petersburg Conservatory, where she earned her Master of Music Degree in piano performance, chamber music, pedagogy and accompaniment (collaborative arts).

Throughout her concert career, Ms. Gabay has performed in some of the great halls of Russia, including the Great Hall of the St. Petersburg Philharmonic, the Chamber Hall of the St. Petersburg Philharmonic, the St. Petersburg Capella, as well as others throughout St. Petersburg. As an accompanist, she has performed in many All-Russian and International competitions, winning Best Accompaniment honors three times. Also, as an accompanist, she participated in several recordings for St. Petersburg Radio and Television.

Ms. Gabay has been a faculty member of the Levine School of Music since 1999 and, in addition, maintains a private studio in Fairfax Station, Va. She performs extensively throughout the Washington area as accompanist, including in such venues as the Kennedy Center Concert Hall, Kennedy Center Terrace Theater, The Lyceum and the Harris Theater of George Mason University, among others.



Anna Balakerskaia

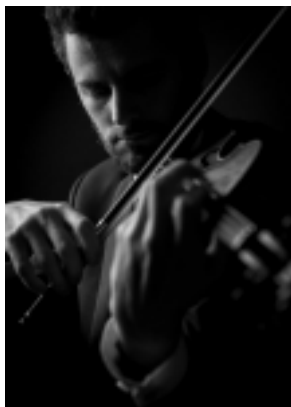
Dr. Anna Balakerskaia is a “consistently thrilling pianist” (Judy Gruber, The Washington Post) whose expression “wells with a delightful freedom,” (Robert Dumm, Clavier) and whose sound “is warm and deep” (Elaine Fine, American Record Guide). Indeed, legendary Russian violinist and conductor Viktor Tretiakov writes this about Dr. Balakerskaia: “A unique, almost extrasensory feeling of ensemble, excellent pianism, a radiant personality – that is [Anna] Balakerskaia!”

As the three-time winner of Best Accompanist honors at the International Tchaikovsky Competition, her career has brought her to some of today’s greatest concert halls, including Carnegie Hall in New York City, the Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires, the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, and the Salle Gaveau in Paris, among many others.

Dr. Balakerskaia has also played with a number of internationally renowned artists, including Leonid Kogan, Mikhail Gantvarg, Ilya Kaler, Kirill Kondrashin, Daniil Shafran, Valery Gergiev and Yuri Temirkanov. She also played with Jacqueline du Pre for Mstislav Rostropovich.

Dr. Balakerskaia is a founding member of the “Ensemble da Camera of Washington,” a trio of musicians from Brazil, Germany and Russia, based in Washington and renowned internationally for their “extraordinary technical skill and musical perception.” (Joseph McLellan, The Washington Post) The ensemble has produced several well-praised recordings while also serving as artists in Residence for the American Youth Philharmonic. They created the Chamber Music Program of the AYPO, where they hold monthly master classes and perform a series of concerts.

Dr. Balakerskaia has had a distinguished teaching career, serving on the faculties of the St. Petersburg and Moscow conservatories. She is currently in her 18th-year teaching at George Mason University, where she is Professor of Piano and Chamber Music. She also serves on the faculty of summer music festivals in Italy, Germany, Russia, and the Netherlands, and as artist in residence at the Orfeo International Music Festival in the Italian Alps. Her students have won prizes at many international competitions, including the Rubinstein International Piano Competition and the Thomas and Evan Cooper International Competition, and perform and teach across the globe.



Gersh Chervinsky

Violinist Gersh Chervinsky is a virtuoso soloist, recitalist, chamber musician and teacher. He has performed with star musicians such as Joshua Bell, Amit Peled, Dana Marsh and others on stages at Bolshoy Hall of Moscow Conservatory, the Hong Kong Cultural Center Music Hall, Strathmore Concert Hall, and the Friedberg and Griswold Concert Halls at the Peabody Institute in Baltimore.

Mr. Chervinsky regularly collaborates with The Washington Bach Consort, Alexandria Symphony Orchestra, The Apollo Orchestra and Baltimore Baroque Band as the associate concertmaster.

He earned music-performance degrees from the Moscow Conservatory, the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University, and the Peabody Conservatory.

Mr. Chervinsky has participated in the prestigious Keshet Eilon Festival (Israel), the London Purcell School Music Festival and the Cremona Music Festival and Competition (Italy). He is a dedicated teacher and maintains his private violin studio in Rockville, directs the Jewish Orchestra of Youth in Silver Spring, and is the head of the string department at the European Academy of Arts in Virginia.



Noah Pan Stier

Noah, 17, a senior at the Maret School, has been playing violin since age 3, studying under June Huang Irina Kats, who serves as his chamber music coach. Noah performs in the Washington area as a soloist and as a chamber musician. He is a member of the National Symphony Orchestra Youth Fellowship program and co-concertmaster of the Philharmonic at the Maryland Classic Youth Orchestras.

Over the years as a soloist, Noah has won the Senior, Intermediate, and Junior divisions of the Levine School's Cogen Concerto Competition and Marlin-Engel Solo Competition. He also has won the Northern Virginia Music Teachers Association Concerto Competition, the Asian-American Music Society Competition, the Feder Memorial String Competition, the Concert Artists International Maestro Competition, the Vivo International Youth Competition, and the Young Musicians Inspiring Change Metropolitan Music Festival.

Noah has performed at Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center's Millennium Stage and Terrace Theatre, the National Gallery of Art, Strathmore Mansion, and the embassies of France, the Netherlands and Austria.



Lucas Das

Lucas is a 17-year-old senior at Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School. He has played cello since age 4 and has been a member of the Washington Musical Pathways Initiative at the Kennedy Center since the program's launch in 2021. Lucas studies with Henry Stubbs at the Levine School of Music, where he has been a member of the Honors Program since 2015, and with Alan Rafferty at the University of Cincinnati. Lucas has been a member of numerous chamber orchestras at Levine, the Maryland Classic Youth Orchestras' Symphony Orchestra and the District of Columbia Youth Orchestra.

He has participated in the Bowdoin International Music Festival (Maine), the Ascent International Chamber Music and Solo Cello Festivals (Cincinnati), the Summer Cello Intensive at Interlochen (Michigan), and National Pathways Summits (Chicago and Cincinnati).

Among Lucas's competition honors are Music Teachers National Association state-level winner and subregional finalist, 2023); OPUS International Music Competition (state-level winner and national finalist, 2022 and '23); U.S. Navy Orchestra Competition (Honorable Mention, 2022 and '23), King's Peak International Competition (winner, 2022), the Feder Memorial String Competition in Washington (winner, 2022), Montgomery County Music Teachers Association (winner, 2021), and Levine's Marlin-Engel and Cogen competitions.



William Hurd

William is an active chamber musician and teacher in the Washington area. Since 2001, he has been a member of the U.S. Air Force Strings and has performed numerous times at the White House, the Vice President's Residence, the U.S. State Department, the Kennedy Center, and the Grand Ole Opry. Several of William's recordings with the Covington String Quartet can be heard on *Beethoven, The New Complete Edition* released in 2020 by Deutsche Grammophone.

William enjoys teaching children ages 4-18 as a Suzuki violin instructor at the Levine School of Music and at the Herdon Suzuki School. He previously served on the faculty of the Sunderman Conservatory of Music at Gettysburg (Pa.) College. He holds degrees from the New England Conservatory of Music, has participated and performed at workshops hosted by the Juilliard and Emerson String Quartets, and has received Suzuki teacher training at institutes in the United States and Canada.



Claire Eichhorn

Clarinetist Claire Eichhorn, Artistic Director of the Ensemble da Camera of Washington, was born in Stuttgart, Germany, to a family of outstanding musicians. She has performed as chamber musician and recitalist throughout the United States and, as an orchestral player with the National Symphony Orchestra, Kennedy Center Orchestra, Baltimore Opera, Virginia Chamber Orchestra, Washington Concert Opera and National Gallery Orchestra. For 10 years she was a member of the Washington Chamber Symphony.

Ms. Eichhorn has played the Highlands (N.C.) Chamber Music Festival, among many others, and has been a frequent guest artist at the annual Brahms Festival at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton..

In addition, Ms. Eichhorn is a sought-after teacher, both at her home studio in Fairfax County (www.claireeichhorn.com) and as a faculty member of the Levine School of Music, where she spearheaded the Clarinet Workshop for high school students, an intensive one-week camp that ran for 10 years. She also led the development of the clarinet curriculum for Levine.

Ms. Eichhorn helped develop the format of the Chamber Ensemble Program at the American Youth Philharmonic Orchestras. Students receive coaching from the acclaimed Ensemble da Camera of Washington, have public master classes and are given performance opportunities throughout the year, including at the White House for guests entering a State Dinner.

Ms. Eichhorn is a graduate of the University of Michigan and counts among her teachers Alfred Zetzer, Fred Ormand, and Bernard Portnoy. She has also worked with Menachem Pressler, Rostislav Dubinsky, and James Buswell in Chamber Music.