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THINGS TO DO

Park University’s International Center for Music announces a new season ‘to celebrate’

BY PATRICK NEAS *SPECIAL TO THE STAR*
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The International Center for Music will launch its season in September with Russian pianist Mikhail Voskresensky. *Courtesy Park University*

Park University's International Center for Music, which Stanislav Ioudenitch founded 20 years ago, has established itself as one of Kansas City's most important musical institutions. Virtuosos from around the world come to Parkville to be shaped by master musicians into artists with international recital careers.

Through its annual performing arts season, the International Center for Music shares its talent with Kansas City with recitals by its extraordinary students, as well as visiting artists who are among the greatest in the world.

ICM's newly announced 2023-2024 season is brimming with musicianship of the highest order. In addition to performances by visiting artists, like legendary Russian pianist Mikhail Voskresensky, Park's own award-winning faculty and students will also have a chance to shine.

The season begins Sept. 22 with a recital by Voskresensky.

Last May, the 87-year-old pianist made the heart-wrenching decision to leave his homeland to protest Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine. He reached out to friends around the world for help. Alan Fletcher, the CEO of the Aspen Music Festival, extended an invitation to Voskresensky to perform at the festival. After several political machinations, Fletcher was able to hustle him out of Russia to America, where he remains to this day.

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“The strength of this man is unprecedented,” said Ioudenitch, ICM’s artistic director. “He’s 87 and brilliant. He’s a fantastic pianist. For years, he was a professor at the Moscow Conservatory.”

Voskresensky’s recital should be touching and memorable.

Another visiting artist next season is Israeli violinist Shmuel Ashkenasi. Currently a violin professor at Bard College, Roosevelt University’s Chicago College of Performing Arts and the Curtis Institute, Ashkenasi also founded the acclaimed Vermeer Quartet. He will give a recital March 22.

“Shmuel Ashkenasi is a beloved professor who is coming to perform and give master classes,” Ioudenitch said. “He is also a legend. All of these artists are legends. Our daughter, Maria, studied with him at Curtis. He’s a prize-winning violinist who won the silver medal at the Tchaikovsky competition many years ago. He is breathtaking.”



Israeli violinist Shmuel Ashkenasi will come to Kansas City in March. *Courtesy Park University*

Maria Ioudenitch is becoming a rising star in classical music. She won three of the most important competitions in classical music: the Ysaÿe International Music Competition, the Tibor Varga International Violin Competition and the Joseph Joachim International Competition. She also recently released her debut album, “Songbird,” on the major label Warner Classics. Accompanying her on the album is the senior Ioudenitch’s protégé Kenny Broberg, who won the silver in the XVI International Tchaikovsky Piano Competition in 2017.

Another artist of more recent vintage is the 22-year-old Swedish violinist Daniel Lozakovich. He will give a recital with pianist Behzod Abduraimov, ICM artist-in-residence, April 14.

“Daniel is one of the greatest stars of the young generation with a huge career,” Ioudenitch said. “He’s become friends with Behzod, and he decided to come to Kansas City. He’s an unbelievable violinist with a major career right now. Very hot.”

The visiting artists are great, but ICM has enough homegrown talent of its own to fill an entire season. Luckily, several concerts will feature ICM faculty and students.

Students from the string studio will give a recital on Oct. 28, and Ioudenitch's piano students will show what they can do on Nov. 30.

Ben Sayevich, violin professor at ICM, and his wife, pianist Lolita Lisovskaya, will give a recital on Feb. 29. Sayevich will also perform as a member of the Rosamunde Trio on Jan. 25. The other members of the trio are ICM cello professor Daniel Veis and pianist Martino Trimo.

"The Rosamunde Trio has never played together in Kansas City before," Ioudenitch said. "Usually, Ben and Daniel go to Europe and meet with Martino, and then play there, but never in Kansas City, so I'm very excited. Martino just released the complete piano works of Beethoven. He also recorded one of the latest and greatest editions of Schubert's works."

ICM also has its own orchestra made up of its students and guest wind and percussion players. The orchestra will perform several concerts next season in Park's Graham Tyler Memorial Chapel.

One of ICM's most anticipated concerts is the annual "Stanislav and Friends," which will take place March 8 at Helzberg Hall.

"The purpose is to bring our best, our stars," Ioudenitch said. "No matter how busy they are, guests and former students from around the world find a way to come and play with us. We have a great relationship with the Kansas City Chamber Orchestra, and next year Behzod and I are going to play something together. I think it's going to be the double concerto by Poulenc."

Reflecting on the past 20 years, Ioudenitch is proud of his faculty and students, and he looks forward to many more years of forging classical superstars while contributing to the cultural life of Kansas City.

"To be honest, I just wanted to create something of high quality, something I believe in," Ioudenitch said. "We try to celebrate music. We try to make a great show for audiences with beautiful repertoire for soloists, chamber ensembles and orchestra. Now we are looking for the school to expand. We have a dream to have better facilities. We're working on a scholarship foundation, which is extremely important. Many plans, many plans."



Swedish violinist Daniel Lozakovich, 22, will join the International Center for Music's season in April. *Courtesy Park University*

For more information. icm.park.edu.

The ICM season:

Sept. 22: Mikhail Voskresensky, piano. 7:30 p.m., 1900 Building, 1900 Shawnee Mission Parkway.

Oct. 6: Orchestra Fall Concert. 7:30 p.m., Graham Tyler Memorial Chapel, 8701 N.W. River Park Drive.

Oct. 28: String Studio. 7:30 p.m., 1900 Building.

Nov. 30: Piano Studio. 7:30 p.m., 1900 Building.

Dec. 2: Orchestra Holiday Concert. 7:30 p.m., Graham Tyler Memorial Chapel.

Jan. 25: Rosamunde Trio. 7:30 p.m., 1900 Building.

Feb. 9: Orchestra Valentine Concert. 7:30 p.m., Graham Tyler Memorial Chapel.

Feb. 29: Ben Sayevich, violin and Lolita Lisovskaya, piano. 7:30 p.m., 1900 Building.

March 8: Stanislav and Friends. 7 p.m., Helzberg Hall, Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts.

March 15: Orchestra Spring Concert. 7:30 p.m., Graham Tyler Memorial Chapel.

March 22: Shmuel Ashkenasi, violin. 7:30 p.m., 1900 Building.

April 14: Behzod Abduraimov, piano, and Daniel Lozakovich, violin. 7:30 p.m., 1900 Building.

April 19: Orchestra Finale. 7:30 p.m., Graham Tyler Memorial Chapel.

KC VITAS - JACKSON THOMAS

KC VITAS fills an important niche in Kansas City's choral scene. The group is devoted entirely to contemporary compositions. On May 19 and 21 at Asbury United Methodist Church, the choir will feature four world premieres, including "When I Go Back to Earth" by KC VITAS founder and executive director, Jackson Thomas.

7 p.m. May 19 and 3 p.m. May 21. Asbury United Methodist Church, 5400 W. 75th St. \$20-\$25. kcvitas.org.

You can reach Patrick Neas at patrickneas@kcartsbeat.com and follow his Facebook page, KC Arts Beat, at www.facebook.com/kcartsbeat.

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