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Piano Quartet St. Petersburg Piano Quartet



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Complete artist information including video, audio and interviews are available at www.pricerubin.com

St. Petersburg Piano Quartet – Ensemble Biography

Ilya Yemakushev, Piano
Alla Aranovskaya, Violin
Boris Vayner, Viola
Thomas Mesa, Cello

In forming the St. Petersburg Piano Quartet, first violinist Alla Aranovskaya and violist Boris Vayner of the world-renowned, Grammy-nominated St. Petersburg String Quartet (www.stpetersburgquartet.com) have joined forces with rising star cellist Thomas Mesa (www.thomasmesacello.com) and pianist Ilya Yakushev (www.ilyayakushev.com), winner of the 2005 World Piano Competition in Cincinnati, whose “vigor and virtuosity” in an “astounding triple debut” with the San Francisco Symphony earned him a place on the San Francisco Chronicle’s list of “Ten Best Classical Music Events of the Year.”

The SPPQ presented its inaugural concert on the BargeMusic series in New York on May 24, 2014. Upcoming engagements include an appearance on the Da Camera Society of St. Mary’s College Chamber Music Series at the Doheny Mansion in Los Angeles on October 11, 2014.

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St. Petersburg Piano Quartet – Individual Biographies

Ilya Yakushev, piano



Russian pianist Ilya Yakushev, with many awards and honors to his credit, continues to astound and mesmerize audiences at major venues on three continents. He made his San Francisco Symphony debut in 2007 with Music Director Michael Tilson Thomas, performing Prokofiev's First & Fourth Piano Concertos as part of the Symphony's Prokofiev Festival. His performances were included in the top ten classical music events of the year by the San Francisco Chronicle, and prompted a return to the Symphony in September 2009 with Maestro Tilson Thomas performing Prokofiev's 3rd Piano Concerto.

The highlights of Mr. Yakushev's 2013-14 season included return appearances with the Des Moines Symphony, Las Cruces Symphony, Cheyenne Symphony, and Utah Symphony. He also performed with the Anchorage Symphony, Winnipeg Symphony, Klassika Orchestra, El Camino Youth Symphony, California Symphony, and New Haven Symphony. Mr. Yakushev also appeared as recitalist at the Mariinsky Concert Hall, International Keyboard Institute & Festival, and Maverick Series.

In February 2014, British label Nimbus Records published Mr. Yakushev's Prokofiev by Yakushev Vol. 1 CD. American Record Guide wrote "Yakushev is one of the very best young pianists before the public today, and it doesn't seem to matter what repertoire he plays — it is all of the highest caliber".

Engagements in 2014-15 season include appearances with the La Crosse Symphony, Rhode Island Philharmonic, Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra, Edmonton Symphony, Pensacola Symphony, and Fort Wayne Philharmonic.

In past seasons, Mr. Yakushev has performed in various prestigious venues worldwide, including Glinka Philharmonic Hall (St. Petersburg), Victoria Hall (Singapore), Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall (New York), Davies Symphony Hall (San Francisco), and Sejong Performing Arts Center (Seoul, Korea). His performances with orchestra include those with the Kirov Orchestra, BBC Concert Orchestra, Boston Pops, Syracuse Symphony, Rochester Philharmonic, Arkansas Symphony and others.

Winner of the 2005 World Piano Competition which took place in Cincinnati, OH, Mr. Yakushev received his first award at age 12 as a prizewinner of the Young Artists Concerto Competition in his native St. Petersburg. In 1997, he received the Mayor of St. Petersburg's Young Talents award, and in both 1997 and 1998, he won First Prize at the Donostia Hiria International Piano Competition in San Sebastian, Spain. In 1998, he received a national honor, The Award for Excellence in Performance, presented to him by the Minister of Culture of the Russian Federation in Moscow. Most recently, Mr. Yakushev became a recipient of the prestigious Gawon International Music Society's Award in Seoul, Korea.

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Mr. Yakushev attended the Rimsky-Korsakov College of Music in his native St. Petersburg, Russia and subsequently came to New York City to attend Mannes College of Music where he studied with legendary pianist Vladimir Feltsman.

Since 2002, Mr. Yakushev has served as Executive Director of the International Keyboard Institute and Festival at the Mannes College in New York City.

Ilya Yakushev is a Yamaha artist.

"Mr. Yakushev can do just about anything he wants."

-The New York Times

"Saturday night, pianist Ilya Yakushev tore up the keyboard and lifted the audience onto its collective feet with a bravura performance of one of the toughest concerti (Prokofiev 2nd) in the repertoire."

-The Arkansas Democrat Gazette

"Sergei Prokofiev was still the ostensible headliner in Davies Symphony Hall over the weekend, as Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony wound up their two-week festival devoted to his music. But the big news was the astonishing tripartite debut of pianist Ilya Yakushev, who single-handedly turned the end of the festival into something unforgettable."

-The San Francisco Chronicle

Alla Aranovskaya, violin

I was born and raised in St. Petersburg, Russia. My parents told me that when I was two and a half years old, I approached a small piano which was in our home. I started to play with one finger the melody from the piece I had heard my sister practicing. My parents, who saw this, immediately started me on piano lessons. After turning six years old, I was taken to a music school. To my parents' disappointment, all of the piano openings were taken and only violin openings remained. So, it was from this circumstance that I started the violin.



In total, I have spent twenty years in music school. This includes the Rimsky-Korsakov Music College and the St. Petersburg Conservatory.



During my senior year at the conservatory, I became a member of the Kirov Opera Orchestra under the direction of Konstantin Simeonov, Yuri Temirkanov, and Valery

Gergiev. And in 1985, I received second prize at the All Russian Violin Competition. Soon after, I

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performed in several Russian cities with local orchestras and recorded the Saint-Saens Concerto No.3 with the St. Petersburg Capella Orchestra, conducted by Alexander Chernushenko. Soon after graduating from the conservatory, I joined the faculty of the conservatory. This was when the idea of starting a string quartet first came to me. Together with Leonid Shukaev, we decided to try to prepare the program for the All Russian String Quartet Competition. That was where our professional journey started. Since then we have given concerts all around the world. There are few places which we haven't visited, such as Africa. But we hope we will have the opportunity to go there soon as well. Feel free to contact me with any questions. I'm more than happy to answer them if I can.

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Indigo Duo
by Alla Aranovskaya (violin) and Boris Vayner (viola)

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Boris Vayner, viola

Boris Vayner was born in Novosibirsk, Russia. His professional background includes Novosibirsk Music College, Novosibirsk State University (majoring in mathematics), the St. Petersburg Conservatory, and the New England Conservatory, where he studied in the class of Carol Rodland and earned his Master of Music degree in 2005.

Since 2005 Mr. Vayner has been the violist of the St. Petersburg String Quartet, intensively touring throughout North America, South America, Europe and Asia. The highlights of his career include performances at Lincoln Center, Library of Congress, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Manchester Bridgewater Hall, Dublin National Concert Hall, St. Petersburg Philharmonic Great Hall and appearance at such festivals as Schleswig-Holstein (Germany), MIMO (Brazil), Buxton (England), Fishguard (Wales), Music Mountain, Rockport, Mainly Mozart in San Diego and many more. He has recently collaborated with such internationally renowned artists as Leon Fleisher, Michael Tree, Peter Donohoe, Anton Nel, and Michele Zukovsky.



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In 2010, Mr. Vayner with the St. Petersburg String Quartet joined the Wichita State University School of Music as Quartet-in-Residence. Since then, he and his colleagues have been an essential part of cultural life of the Wichita community. Recent activities include a performance at Carnegie Hall with the WSU Symphony Orchestra, and launching a new school (St. Petersburg Music Academy) for gifted children as part of the WSU School of Music.

Mr. Vayner's other musical activities include teaching and conducting student orchestras at St. Petersburg International Summer Academy held at the Music Mountain Festival in CT, at "En Sol Sostenido" Music Festival in Tijuana, Mexico, at the ELAN International Music Festival in Dallas, TX and at the "Prestissimo" International Music Festival in Lititz, PA, as well as composition. His arrangement of Bach's Chaconne for the quartet was broadcast live on BBC 3 radio station in July 2010.

Thomas Mesa, cello

Thomas Mesa, 24, a native of Miami, Florida is of Cuban American descent and began his musical studies on cello at the age of eleven. He is a graduate of The Juilliard School (B.M. 2012); and Northwestern University (M.M. 2014) where he was the recipient of the Richard and Helen Thomas Fellowship and Graduate Program Honors for extraordinary contributions to the String Department. Thomas is a member of St. Petersburg Piano Quartet which, in May, played to two sold out audiences on New York's Barge Music Series. He also toured with Itzhak Perlman and Proteges both nationally and internationally in 2011-2012. He has performed either in ensemble or as a soloist in venues such as Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, Paul Hall, Barge Music, WMP Music Hall, Arsht Center for Performing Arts, Jordan Hall, and on PBS's From the Top. As a collaborative artist, he appeared at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City and in Philadelphia in December, 2013, as a solo cellist with The Crossing Choir (winner of the 2009 and 2011 ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming) for the US Premiere of "Astralis" by German Composer Wolfgang Rihm. Thomas will make another appearance with The Crossing Choir on April, 11, 2015, at Longwood Gardens in Philadelphia playing two works for cello: Svyati of Tavener and Fuoco Celeste of Santa Ratniece.



Thomas' orchestral experience includes being principal cellist for Northwestern Symphony Orchestra when he was not performing in their Contemporary Music Ensemble; Juilliard Orchestra and ensembles in New York; Youth Philharmonic Orchestra in Boston; and principal cellist of Greater Miami Youth Symphony. He has performed under the batons of James Levine, Tan Dun, David Afkham, Alan Gilbert, James Conlon, Nicholas McGegan, Ludovic Morlot, Franz Welser-Most, Joel Sachs, Benjamin Zander, Victor Yampolsky, Donald Nally, and Timothy J. Robblee. Thomas won first place in the Thaviu Competition for String Performance in Chicago (2013); first place in Alhambra Orchestra Concerto Competition, and was the recipient of the Ray Millette Young Artist's Award, Certificate of Merit in Music from the City of Miami; and received an Outstanding Musicianship award from New World Symphony (2006). He has attended Summer festivals and institutes which include the Perlman Chamber Workshop, Perlman Stowe Residency, Heifetz International Music Institute; Banff, Kronberg and Royal Danish Academy Masterclasses,

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Kneisel Hall, Yellow Barn Young Artists' Program, Aspen Music Festival and Eastern Music Festival. He was a teaching assistant at Meadowmount School of Music for the past two Summers and Visiting Artist and Faculty at St. Petersburg String Academy in July. Thomas' principal teachers have been Hans Jorgen Jensen, Timothy Eddy, Mark Churchill, Ross Harbaugh, and Wells Cunningham.

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