

Irena Portenko

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CLASSES TAUGHT

- Applied Piano (majors and non-majors, undergraduate and graduate)
- Masterclasses (solo piano and chamber music)
- Collaborative Piano: Repertoire and Performance Practice
- Piano Ensemble and Sight-Reading Skills Piano Laboratory (complete core curriculum)
- Piano Proficiency Course for Education Majors
- Piano Pedagogy: Teaching Beginning and Intermediate Piano Students
- Piano Pedagogy Repertoire Class and Methods
- Music Appreciation (for music and non-music majors)
- Music Theory and Keyboard Skills (beginning and advanced)

EDUCATION

2000-2004 UNIVERSITY of MICHIGAN Ann Arbor, MI
DMA, Piano Performance.
Recipient: Gottlieb Scholarship.

1996-1999 KIEV NATIONAL ACADEMY of MUSIC Kiev, Ukraine
Post-Graduate work, DM (equiv.) Collaborative Piano.

1998-1999 UNIVERSITY of MICHIGAN Ann Arbor, MI
MM, Piano Performance.
Recipient: Joseph Brinkman Scholarship.

1990-1995 KIEV NATIONAL ACADEMY of MUSIC Kiev, Ukraine
BM, Honors in Performance, Collaborative Piano, and Pedagogy.
Recipient: Honors Award; V. Kosenko Stipend.

COLLEGE TEACHING AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

**August 2010-present THE INTERNATIONAL MUSIC FESTIVAL "INTERHARMONY".
Sulzbach-Rosenberg, (Germany), Arcidosso (Italy).
Faculty, accompanist, recitalist.**

- Taught piano and chamber music to pre-college, college and adult students.
- Prepared the students for the performances at the festival.
- Conducted Masterclasses.
- Coached and performed with the instrumentalists and vocalists both individually and in group settings.
- Extensively accompanied for lessons and masterclasses given by the colleagues.
- Collaborated with the faculty of the festival on multiple occasions.

**October 2007-Present THE MUSIC CONSERVATORY of WESTCHESTER White Plains, NY
Piano and Music Theory Instructor**

- Provided inspirational instruction to the students of various ages. Organized Masterclasses, extra-curricular semi-annual student performances.
- Prepared most advanced students for AFAF Concerto Competition Queens Concerto Competition, Yonkers Philharmonic Concerto Competition, as well as for AFAF, AADGT, RMA and NYSSMA solo and chamber music festivals.
- Instructed beginning and advanced music theory classes; taught music theory basics, harmonization, transposition, composition and keyboard harmony.
- Provided students with the opportunity to gain broader knowledge of keyboard as well as understanding music theory concepts using their own instruments.

**January 2008-Present SCARSDALE HIGH SCHOOL CONCERT CHOIR, Scarsdale, NY
Rehearsal Accompanist and the Middle School Choir**

- Accompanied rehearsals, assisted in preparation to a semi-annual performance.
- Provided an accompaniment for master classes (both scheduled and on the short notice).
- Accompanied for Choral Reading Sessions and Seminars.

**January-May 2006 MANSFIELD UNIVERSITY Mansfield, PA
Full-time Piano Faculty, Sabbatical Replacement**

- Taught piano majors and piano secondary students; instructed piano laboratory.
- Conducted weekly master classes.
- Coached piano ensemble and collaborative groups.
- Recruited through the audition sessions.
- Served as a jury member and coordinator during mid-term and final sessions. Coordinated placement examinations to all levels of piano and keyboard skills classes. Participated in regular faculty discussions of procedures and policies of the pedagogy department. Promoted performances of the piano students throughout the area of Mansfield and Wellsboro, PA.
- Collaborated with colleagues on numerous performance occasions. Proposed several extra-curricular activities, including field trips to various concerts. In collaboration with the Piano Department arranged Piano and Harpsichord Guest-Recitals and Masterclasses.
- Organized students' outreach program including poetry and performance presentation. Prepared a student for performance at the International Piano Competition in Kiev, Ukraine— Diploma and Honorable Mention (April 26th-May 2, 2006.) Gave lecture-demonstration during National Educational Convention at Mansfield University, PA on March 20th 2006.
- Conducted an active research in preparation to presenting poster sessions at Northeast 2006 College Music Society at Wilkes-Barre University, PA on March 18th , 2006; and lecture-recital at 2007 North- east Chapter Conference In Rider University, Princeton, NJ on March 23rd, 2007

2003-2005 ALBION COLLEGE Albion, MI
Adjunct Piano Faculty

- Instructed applied lessons to music majors and non-majors.
- Provided strong background of knowledge in music theory and history during lesson times, and, additionally, outside the classroom.
- Provided students with the opportunities to participate in chamber music and duet rehearsals.
- Prepared students for graduate recital performances and lectures.
- Frequently supported students with mentoring, encouragement, and advisement on balancing academics and social surrounding aspects; assisted in finding ultimate solutions in various conflict situations. Assisted in developing stronger performance program.
- Served as a jury member during semi-annual sessions.
- Preparing and performing at faculty recitals and workshops
- Served as a jury member and coordinator during mid-term and final sessions. Coordinated placement examinations to all levels of piano and keyboard skills classes.
- Participated in regular faculty discussions of procedures and policies of the pedagogy department.

2003-2005 UNIVERSITY of MICHIGAN Ann Arbor, MI
Piano Faculty, Lecturer

- Taught and coordinated curriculum design of pre-college piano program.
- Instructed group classes and individual lessons in piano performance, music theory and appreciation. Supplemented students with the music material for performances in duet and trio settings.
- Coordinated students' presentations on various topics on music appreciation, theory and history, encouraging audio, video and live illustration.
- Contributed into the development of the pre-college piano program by strengthening aspect of theory background; presented numerous topics on harmonization, analysis of major forms, and key relationship within the body of a composition among others.
- Prepared students for college level auditions, theory placement tests and oral examinations.
- Prepared students for local, state, and national festivals and competitions.

2001-2002 DETROIT MUSIC INSTITUTE Warren, MI

- Gave Semi-annual Masterclasses and workshops for Detroit area pre-college students in preparation for festivals and competitions.

2000-2003 UNIVERSITY of MICHIGAN Ann Arbor, MI

Graduate Student Instructor

- Taught undergraduate class piano (complete core curriculum of applied piano course), including key-board skills, theory, keyboard harmony, analysis of forms, score reading, accompanying, sight-reading, harmonization, and introduction to music courses.
- Taught applied piano lessons to undergraduate and graduate students, organized student concerts and studio classes.
- Enhanced presentation of the course material by demonstrating examples from audio, video and power point sources; gave live performances during class; used teamwork as one of the strongest tools toward reaching goals in learning; scheduled extra time before tests and exams;
- Served as a jury member and coordinator during mid-term and final sessions. Coordinated placement examinations to all levels of piano and keyboard skills classes. Participated in regular faculty discussions of procedures and policies of the pedagogy department.
- Coached and coordinated production of operas and concert programs in the University of Michigan and the University Musical Society.

**1996-1999 KIEV STATE CONSERVATORY Kiev, Ukraine Graduate
Assistant at Collaborative Piano Department**

- Served as assistant and a jury member in collaborative piano department.
- Coached chamber groups in preparation for competitions and final exams.

- Gave series of lectures on coaching techniques and collaborative piano literature. Emphasized importance of form and analysis of chamber music composition in order to achieve structural unity in a group setting performance.
- Organized departmental recitals, workshops, guest masterclasses, and conferences.

1998 MICHIGAN

STATE UNIVERSITY

East Lansing, MI

- Served as accompanying assistant. Duties included coaching chamber music groups, collaborating with faculty and students in recitals and workshops.
- Coached singers, coordinated orchestra rehearsals, and prepared production of operas and music theatre productions.

ADJUDICATIONS, MASTERCLASSES AND CONFERENCE APPEARANCES

A respected educator, Irena Portenko has adjudicated the Solo Piano and Chamber Music Competition Art of the 21st Century in Ukraine; presented lectures and performed at the College Music Society and MENC in the United States; at the World Piano Conferences (Novi Sad, Serbia), and at the Interharmony Music Festival (Sulzbach- Rosenberg, Germany).

- Arcidosso, Italy, 2012,
- Sulzbach-Rosenberg, Germany, August 2012, 2011, 2011.
- World Piano Conference, Novi Sad, Serbia, 2009
- University of Nevada, Las Vegas, February 2009;
- Princeton, NJ, CMS Conference, March 23rd, 2007; Mansfield
- University, PA, MENC, March 25th, 2006; Wilkes-Barre, PA,
- CMS Conference, March 18th, 2006; Kiev, Ukraine, April 25- May 5, 2006;
- Jivaskula, Finland, June 7-17, 2006;
- Velikii Novgorod, Russia, June 28-July 3, 2006;
- Kiev, Ukraine, December 11-19, 2004.

RECORDINGS AND TV APPEARANCES

- I. Kremen Kaleidoscope, The Twenty Five Preludes and Fugues for Piano and Humankind. September 2011.
- F. Chopin, the Twenty Four Etudes for Piano Op. 10 and Op. 25. July 2009.
- Programs on the F. Chopin and I. Kremen. Arts of Westchester, hosted by: Stephen Halpern ([www. PCTV76.org](http://www.PCTV76.org))

CONCERTO PERFORMANCES

Irena Portenko has appeared as a soloist with orchestras in the United States and Europe. She has performed under the batons of Kenneth Kiesler, Rossen Milanov, Volodymyr Sirenko, Uwe Harrer, Dai Uk Lee, and Allin Vlasenko, to name just a few.

- ANTARA STRING ENSEMBLE, conductor Harold Jones. Performance of D. Shostakovich's First Piano Concerto in C Major. December 4th, 2012.
- LEONADING SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, conductor Uwe Harrer. June 1st and 2nd, 2012. Performance of P. Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto in B flat Minor. Leonding, Austria.
- KIEV NATIONAL PHILHARMONIA, conductor Volodymyr Sirenko. May 2008.
- American-Ukrainian Music FestiVal. Performance of S. Rachmaninoff's Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini, Op.43.
MANSFIELD UNIVERSITY, STEADMAN THEATRE, conductor Kenneth Sarch.
- February 19th, 2006. Performance of W.A. Mozart's Piano Concerto in c minor K. 491 (with the Cadenza by Alfred Schnittke.)
- KIEV NATIONAL PHILHARMONIA, conductor Volodymyr Sirenko. November 25th, 2005. Kiev, Ukraine. Performance of S. Prokofiev's Second Piano Concerto, Op. 16.
- BRITTON RECITAL HALL. Ann Arbor, .MI. January 25th, 2004. Members of the University of Michigan String Orchestra. Performance of J.S. Bach's Concerto in D Minor, BWV 1052.
- HILL AUDITORIUM, Conductor Kenneth Kiesler. Ann Arbor, MI. January 25th, 2004 and January 29th, 2002. University of Michigan Symphony Orchestra. Performance of D. Shostakovich's Concerto # 1 in C Major Op. 35.
- HILL AUDITORIUM, conductor Rossen Milanov. Ann Arbor, MI. April 18th, 1999. University of Michigan Philharmonia Orchestra. Performance of S. Rachmaninoff's on a Theme of Paganini, Op. 43.
- Wharton Center, Conductor Dai Uk LEE, East Lansing, MI. January 27th, 1997. Michigan State University Symphony Orchestra. Performance of S. Rachmaninoff's Concerto # 1 in f sharp minor Op. 1.

WORK WITH CONTEMPORARY COMPOSERS

Ms. Portenko's passion for collaborating with and performing the music of contemporary composers has led her to interpreting numerous works by living American, Chinese and Ukrainian composers.

ISRAEL KREMEN (World Premiere of "Kaleidoscope" - The Twenty Five Preludes and Fugues for Piano and Humankind

- EVAN CHAMBERS (Fire Hose Reel for fiddle and piano— received the Best Performance Award in Collage'02; Relentless Death for voice and piano.)
- MICHAEL DAUGHERTY (All-American Premiere of Venetian Blinds for piano solo (2002.)
- WILLIAM BOLCOM (Sonatas for violin and piano Nos. 2 and 3.)

- ELLWOOD DERR (Sonata for saxophone and piano.)
 - MICHAEL UDOW (Shattered Mirror, Opera for Soloists, Percussion, Dance Company, and Synthesizer.)
 - LU PEI (Three Pieces for saxophone and piano.)
 - MYROSLAV SKORYK (World Premiere of Second Sonata for violin and piano.)
 - VALENTYN SILVESTROV (Sonatas for piano.)
 - HEINRICH HARTLE (Am Nibel, a song collection for soprano and piano)
 - IVAN KARABYTZ (Preludes for piano.)
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- VOLODYMYR GUBA (Sonata for flute and piano; Sonata for two flutes and piano.
 - VITALII FILIPENKO (Toccatto for piano, and other miniature pieces.)
 - VALENTYN SILVESTROV (Sonatas for Piano.)

PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

The New York Times, NY, June 2009

"...So it was well worth attending the recital by the pianist Irena Portenko (...) played through Chopin's Etudes with a relaxed and resourceful technique (...) her playing was admirably honest and clear-textured. Ms. Portenko pulled off a feat that puts her in a select company."

The New York Concert Review, June 2009

"She brought out the Etudes distinctive moods...in a most auspicious debut, which was rewarded with a standing ovation (and many flowers) by a large, enthusiastic audience".

Sulzbach-Rosenberg, August 2012

"Portenko's Fugue (by Bach-I.P.) was carried with a smooth dance-like feeling, that one can rarely hear."

Leonding Journal, Austria, June 2012

"brilliance and feeling, resonance and contrasting tempo reduction".

Sulzbach-Rosenberg, Germany, August 2011

"natural and effortless touch".

Sullivan County News, NY, August 2003

...fairly glittered with sparkling piano virtuosity as she performed some of the most challenging works of Polish Frederic Chopin in Shandeleer Festival's Sunset Concert Pavilion.

Detroit Free Press, MI, October 2002

...The most powerful work on the program happened to be for solo piano -- "Venetian Blinds"... An abstract veneer kept melting into primary-colored harmony, melody and form, but the shadings of light and dark -- Daugherty said he was thinking of film noir -- informed the music with a mystery and depth. Pianist Irena Portenko's exciting reading unlocked the music's technical challenges.

Ukrainian Weekly, MI, 2000

...Irena Portenko performed a repertoire of contemporary and classical music with passion, diligence, tenderness and, at times, robust virtuosity.

CD REVIEWS

American Record Guide Published: January 2012.

Merging, according to the composer, a huge number of musical styles—"from 12th Century motet to 12-tone melodies to modern rap, from European folk music to the oldest religious melodies to a Chinese tune played on black keys only", the aptly named Kaleidoscope is a large work in every sense (...) shines with wit, originality, and craft (...) This is a piece worth listening to. The recording does it justice: Irena Portenko is expressive but never dull, sloppy, or mechanical.

Audiophile Audition Published: August, 2010.

A heroic effort, these well-recorded complete etudes are a mark of a superior talent paying homage to Chopin's 200th anniversary. Her inscription of the complete Chopin Etudes (15-16 July 2009) in the Steinway D testifies to a polished artist working well within the Romantic milieu. Portenko's spans, her steady pulsation, her liquid phrasing, bespeak a long familiarity with the Chopin style.

The August 2010 Choice CD Blog WCLV Classical FM Published: August, 2010.

Ukrainian-born Irena Portenko...is apparently fearless. This disc comes on the heels of her highly successful performance of the same program at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall, where she received a standing ovation.

By Robert Anderson (London, UK), Music & Vision Published: August, 2010.

Portenko has the easy fluidity of touch and tone that can simulate the sound of keyboard instruments made during Chopin's lifetime. The Etudes are designed as technical challenges, each of which is met with enviable ease.

Fanfare Magazine Published: Fall 2010.

Her etudes are as much an intellectual accomplishment as a technical one. The elucidation of multiple voices and counterpoint is one of the particular joys of Portenko's rendition. One of the particular joys of her interpretation is in seeing how the "personality" of individual etudes reflects the cycle's place in the

history of piano composition I listened to Portenko's CD four times before writing this review, and each time I found new subtleties to enjoy. It is a product of a distinctive voice and a fine temperament.

COMPETITIONS AND FESTIVALS

Among frequent awards and recognitions, Ms Portenko has been awarded prizes at numerous international solo, concerto and chamber music competitions throughout the U.S., Ukraine and France.

- Winner of Concerto Competition, 2002, University of Michigan.
- 2nd Prize Winner, Society of Musical Arts Young Artist Competition, 2002, Ann Arbor MI.
- Semi-finalist, Gina Bachauer International Artist Competition, 2002, Salt Lake City UT.
- Winner of Concerto Competition 1999, University of Michigan.
- Winner, of Honors Competition, 1996, Michigan State University.
- Grand Prix Winner of Pierre Lantier International competition 1994, Paris, France.
- 1st PRIZE Winner of the International Chamber Music Competition, 1993, Khmelnytsky, Ukraine.
- 1st PRIZE Winner, National Prokofiev Chamber Music Competition, 1993, Donetsk, Ukraine.
- Endless Mountain Music Festival, performer, 2006, Mansfield/Wellsboro, PA.
- Prague International Piano Masterclass and Festival, participant, 2003, Prague, Czech Republic.
- Shandeleer Music Festival, participant, 2003, Shandeleer NY.
- Gilmore International Piano Festival, participant, 2002, Kalamazoo MI.
- International Festival of Chamber Music in Vierzon, participant, 1995, France.
- Festival Days of the Ukraine in Germany, 1993, participant.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

- MTNA 2002-Present.
- MMTA 2002-Present.
- COLLEGE MUSIC SOCIETY 2004-Present.

LANGUAGES

Fluent in English, Ukrainian, Russian.

Advanced beginner in French, German.

TEACHERS:

PIANO

Arthur Greene, Yong Hi Moon, Igor Ryabov, Logan Skelton, Sergei Skrynchenko, Ralph Votapek, Daniil Yudilevich; Penelope Crawford (fortepiano), Edward Parmentier (harpsichord.)

THEORY

Ellwood Derr (18th Century Counterpoint, lecture,) Marion Guck (Form and Analysis I and II, seminar,) Andrew Mead (20th Century Music Theory, lecture.)

CHAMBER MUSIC

Andrew Jennings, Amy Porter, Anton Nel, Liudmila Tsvirko.

MUSICOLOGY

Naomi André (History of Symphony, lecture; Hearing Voices, seminar) Yopie Prince (music and literature seminar.) Louise Stein (Music Appreciation, seminar),

MASTERCLASSES

Jerome Lowenthal, Maria Gambarian, Robert Roux, Gilbert Kalish, Nelita True, Eugene Pridonoff, Earl Wild

REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.