

Society: Real Time (Realnoye Vremya)

Ramilya Saubanova: “Tatar Music Resonates Deeply with U.S. Audiences”

00:00, 16 January 2025

A native of Nizhnekamsk Tours the U.S., showcasing the works of Yakhin and Zhiganov



The program features Ramilya Saubanova performing works by Yakhin, Yarullin, Zhiganov, Monasypov, as well as traditional Tatar folk songs.
Photo: Courtesy of Ramilya Saubanova

By the age of 30, Ramilya Saubanova had achieved remarkable success, winning prestigious international competitions such as the World Vision Music International Competition. A recipient of the Presidential Scholarship of Tatarstan, she has graced the stage as a soloist at the St. Petersburg Music House. Last year, she captivated audiences across the United States with performances of works by Tatar composers as well as traditional folk songs. This year, she is preparing to release her debut solo album, featuring music by Latchford, Crozier, Medtner, and Brahms.

“This journey was far from easy”

–Ramilya, where did you study in Kazan?

–My education is one of the most meaningful and inspiring aspects of my life, and it is something I am deeply proud of. For 21 years, I pursued my studies, including professional music education, at some of the most prestigious institutions. My journey began at Gymnasium No. 30 in my hometown of Nizhnekamsk, a school with a musical and aesthetic bias. This school functioned similarly to a Secondary Specialized Music boarding School in Kazan, where I continued my studies at the age of 15.

Following that, I was fortunate to study intensively for five years at the Kazan State Conservatory named after Nazib Zhiganov, where I delved deeply into my profession.

–Then you went on to study in the USA?

–My educational trajectory led me to the United States, where I pursued a master’s degree at one of the oldest and most prestigious conservatories in the country—the Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University.

This journey was far from easy; it demanded immense dedication, discipline, and resilience. Yet, it was this transformative educational experience, enriched with life lessons and professional challenges, that ultimately shaped me into the musician and individual I am today.



At the concert. Photo: Courtesy of Ramilya Saubanova

“The interaction with Renat Enikeev was especially meaningful to me”

–How did you become interested in Tatar music?

–Thanks to my family and teachers, I grew up immersed in an atmosphere of profound respect for Tatar culture and music—whether it was traditional music, popular, or classical. From an early age, my repertoire consistently featured works by Tatar classical composers.

My interaction with Renat Enikeev was particularly significant; his warm feedback on my interpretation of his works remains a cherished memory. I also had the honor of performing Rustem Yakhin’s piano concerto with the Great Wind Orchestra at the Saydashev State Grand Concert Hall in Kazan. Yakhin’s music resonates with me deeply. I take great joy in performing his compositions, sharing his music scores, and introducing others to his genius, along with that of other exceptional Tatar composers. Preserving and promoting this rich musical heritage is not only a passion but a vital part of my identity and artistic mission.

–How did the idea of organizing a series of concerts featuring Tatar classical and contemporary music in the United States come about?

–While studying in America, I envisioned a project to introduce Tatar classical music to a diverse, multinational audience. This vision took shape with the support of an award from the inaugural North American Tatar Summit in 2023.

I created a musical show that beautifully weaves Tatar classical piano and chamber music with elements of a fairy tale, inspired by Tatar legends and folklore. The narrative features beloved characters such as Batyr, Suyumbike, and Shurale—who, incidentally, has become a favorite among audiences! The program includes compositions by Rustem Yakhin, Nazib Zhiganov, Farid Yarullin, Almaz Monasypov, and Tatar traditional songs. Enhancing the experience, the performance is enriched with visual effects, information about the composers and traditional songs, and a presentation of Tatar arts and crafts.

I plan to release a film

I toured the United States with this program, performing in California, Maryland, New York, and at the Russian Embassy in Washington, DC. The project garnered wonderful reviews, which led to a collaboration with the Peabody Conservatory. Together, we created a film based on this musical show. Scheduled for release this year, the involvement of such a prestigious institution underscores the significance of the project.

–What was the audience’s reaction?

–The audience has been enthusiastic about Tatar music, expressing genuine interest in a culture that is entirely new to them. Many have asked questions about Tatarstan, a republic most had never heard of before. It brings me immense joy to actively develop this project and introduce

Tatar music to new audiences. I am also deeply encouraged to be the only pianist in the United States presenting Tatar music in this unique format.



At the Russian Embassy. Photo: Courtesy of Ramilya Saubanova

I see my mission as sharing the rich heritage of Tatar culture, inspiring and educating audiences through music. The [Tatar Classical Music Project](#) not only brings the music of Tatar composers to light but also leaves a lasting impression on listeners, sparking curiosity about national identity and celebrating cultural diversity.

By Radif Kashapov

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