



From Russia, with Love of Music

"Pianist to the Stars" Oksana Kolesnikova moves beyond her composer/concert pianist training and evolves as a tour-de-force on L.A.'s burgeoning entrepreneur circuit.

By Scott A. Aruti

“It is often said that beauty is in the eye of the beholder”

...but if that scenario transcends the physical and encompasses unbridled determination, instinctively-instilled raw talent and a keen sense of entrepreneurship, Russian-born Oksana Kolesnikova would redefine the meaning of “knockout.” In a town notorious for nourishing the dreams of everyone who has ever fantasized about becoming famous – and, in some cases, infamous – it’s not always easy to cut through the dense fog of Hollywood promises and find one’s footing, yet this classically-trained composer, concert pianist and entrepreneur has done just that in a relatively scant period of time. From concerts and television performances to performing at the legendary *Polo Lounge* in the *Beverly Hills Hotel*, recording multiple albums and becoming a successful business owner, Oksana is a true testament to the American dream.

As current owner and operator of the *Oksana School of Music and Art* in Beverly Hills, a facility that has won the coveted *Best of Beverly Hills Business Award* and which has become recognized on L.A.’s uber-competitive arts education scene, Oksana reaches students in the greater Los Angeles area through both in-person and online lessons, with a plethora of professional instructors boasting years of experience under her watch. Pupils exhibiting skills of all levels – from beginning to intermediate to advanced – are welcome in the state-of-the-art school, and even students in other states or countries can get in on the learning experience by way of *Skype* music lessons.

It’s these online instructional sessions that have been casting an intrigue-laden spotlight on Oksana’s school as of late, enabling students around the world the opportunity to take advantage of personal, one-on-one instruction with the convenience of home-based study. Students interact with their instructor in real time, as if they were in the same room with them, and all that’s required is a computer, broadband connection to the Internet, a webcam and microphone. According to *Oksana Management Group, Inc.* representatives, online lesson times are flexible to fit an individual student’s schedule.

Introduced to the piano at a very young age, Oksana herself explains the passion behind what she does:

“I believe that music should be a part of everyone’s life. Personally, I have found great joy in being able to express myself creatively through music, and I feel that everyone deserves to experience that joy. The way I see it, the art of music brings us together through inspiration, confidence-building in the young and fulfillment in adults and seniors.”

“To me, music is indeed a blessing, and I founded my school to help students discover that blessing for themselves – all while using it to enrich their lives.”

Long before the concept of owning and operating an ultra-successful music school in Los Angeles was even a fantasy, Oksana was first exposed to the art of musical expression when she studied classical piano in Russia at the tender age of five. By the time she was 15, she and her family had decided to emigrate from their home in Barnaul, Siberia to the United States sometime after the breakup of the USSR; once in America, Oksana would go on to attend *St. Petersburg College* in St. Petersburg, Florida and in 1999 would win the coveted *Florida State Young Artists Symposium* competition. This accolade led to a scholarship to the *Florida State*

University School of Music, where she graduated with honors in August of 2001 – but not before marrying the man who would become her manager in 2000, with whom she has a son born in 2009. During her coursework at *Florida State University* and following graduation, Oksana performed throughout the Sunshine State and was noticed by an executive at the *Home Shopping Network (HSN)*, who asked her to perform on the television network. She returned regularly and garnered a national following of fans even in this early stage of a still-blossoming career, going on to be featured on cosmetic mogul Adrienne Arpel's *HSN* show.

Oksana's fascinating story continues in 2003 and 2004, when she proudly wore the honor of becoming the first Russian-born female pianist to travel overseas to entertain U.S. military personnel while completing two world tours on behalf of the *Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR)* department of the *U.S. Navy* tour to entertain U.S. troops in Guam, South Korea, Japan, Italy, Spain and Greece, and was invited to perform for *United Nations* officials in New York City – an accomplishment that some of the world's artists have yet to achieve.

Once her performer and composer talents were wholly nurtured and honed in, Oksana was featured on the cover of several industry publications, eventually becoming a regular entertainer at the legendary *Polo Lounge* of the famous *Beverly Hills Hotel*. Here, her "in-demand" status continued to evolve – and does so to this day – with regard to private and charitable events, and it wasn't long before she headed into the recording studio to capitalize on her piano-playing expertise. The result was a mesmerizing discography of eight albums encompassing original, classical and popular musical selections that continues to inspire other prospective hopefuls in the entertainment industry – Oksana's *Free Floating* CD in particular stands out from the rest, recognized as the 2010 *Best Classical Album of the Year* by *SoloPiano.com*. The Russian-born talent bombshell has also collaborated with other internationally-renowned music artists on recording projects, with her own original compositions having been chosen by such world-recognized stars as a template for their recordings.

Of course, when this type of creative evolution takes on this kind of fever pitch, more doors begin to open – and so it was with Oksana Kolesnikova, who would go on to enjoy international media coverage that has included television appearances on *PBS* with Scott Houston ("The Piano Guy"), on the *Home Shopping Network (HSN)* as a performer and businesswoman and on *CBS Los Angeles* where she was featured as "Woman of the Week." As a musician and teacher, she has been featured in a plethora of noteworthy editorial outlets including *The New York Times*, *St. Petersburg Times* and *Los Angeles Business Journal*.

It is perhaps with a touch of irony that Oksana would launch her own music school in the center of what could only be described as a "celebrity hotbed" and go on to be known as the "Pianist to the Stars;" indeed, this well-deserved moniker reflects a proverbial who's-who roster of renowned celebrities she has taught or performed for. These individuals include, but are certainly not limited to, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Maria Shriver, Jennifer Lopez, Marc Anthony, Justin Timberlake, Jessica Alba, Nicole Kidman, Keith Urban, Sean "P. Diddy" Combs, Usher, Fifty Cent, Forest Whitaker, Seal, Heidi Klum, Lionel Richie and many others.

At the heart of Oksana's passion for teaching and evolving to become the most successful businesswoman she can be are two primary elements – her school and a number of ventures she is either undertaking or currently working on. As the 2013 winner of the *Best of Beverly Hills Business Award*, the *Oksana School of Music and Art* – was initially founded to offer in-person and online lessons in piano, guitar, violin, drums and voice, among other instruments, to students in the greater Los Angeles area; to this day, the facility continues to do so, backed by a team of instructors who are certified professionals boasting years of experience to their credit. "Personal music coaching at the school is based on each student's current skill level, goals and dreams," adds Oksana.

The omnitalented Oksana Kolesnikova has also expanded beyond the boundaries of her school by becoming involved in a number of recent undertakings, starting with her endorsement of the *Flychord Piano* company and a possible role as spokesperson for the brand, all in addition to a collaboration with Internet sensation "Dr. Viossy," the artist known for his heavy metal rendition of Beethoven's third movement of "Moonlight Sonata" arranged Oksana's piano masterpiece "The Voice of Life" in melodic metal style to the delight of both piano and hard rock music fans. Further, the *Oksana Management Group* is in the midst of continuously improving the aforementioned online teaching platform, available on a subscription basis, in which Oksana can teach hundreds of students simultaneously, with lessons recorded on legendary actor Nicolas Cage's Ferrari-red baby grand and on a *Flychord DP420K* digital piano.

In the area of charity involvement, Oksana is a strong proponent of *Smile Train*, the non-profit international organization that provides free surgeries to children born with cleft lip and palate, and often performs free-of-charge at fundraisers for the group as organized by her management team, donating 100-percent of the proceeds to this most noble cause.

With the future looking brighter than ever for "Pianist to the Stars" Oksana Kolesnikova, there is seemingly no slowing the efforts of this creatively-gifted teacher, performer and businesswoman who has transformed what were once mere fantasies of living the American dream into a lush, vivid reality.



For more information about Oksana,
contact the *Oksana Management Group, Inc.*

(323) 284-7930 or visit www.OksanaManagementGroup.com