

Xenia Pestova, piano

www.xeniapestova.com

“an uncompromising artist” - [Textura](#)

“a model of poise and technical control... a first-rate contemporary pianist”
- [Fanfare](#)

“A new star in the heavens” - [Taranaki Daily News](#)

"one of the leading performers of contemporary, non-conformist music"
- [HisVoice](#)

“Hold tight” - [Chicago Reader](#)

Long Biography:

Described as “[outstanding](#)” (Tempo), “[stunning](#)” (Wales Arts Review), “[ravishing](#)” (Pizzicato) and “[remarkably sensuous](#)” (New Zealand Herald), pianist Xenia Pestova’s performances and recordings have earned her a reputation as a leading interpreter of uncompromising repertoire of her generation. Lauded for “[dynamic energy and crystalline precision](#)” (RTE Nova Ireland), Pestova is featured at major festivals and venues around the world, including appearances at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London, Glasgow Royal Concert Halls, Philharmonie Luxembourg, Festival Archipel (Geneva), Christchurch Arts Festival (New Zealand), Cluster New Music and Integrated Arts Festival (Canada), Frontiers+ (Birmingham), Holland Festival (Amsterdam), Lanaudière (Canada), Festival Musica (Strasbourg), Sonorities (Belfast), Spark (USA) and Voix Nouvelles Royaumont (France). She is equally at home in experimental concert settings, and has performed in an underground World War II fortress, tropical gardens and a natural cave system inhabited by hibernating bats.

Xenia’s widely acclaimed recordings of core piano duo works of the Twentieth Century by John Cage and Karlheinz Stockhausen with pianist Pascal Meyer are available on four CDs for Naxos Records. Her recording of Stockhausen’s “Mantra” was praised as “[a highly accomplished presentation of one of the](#)

landmark pieces in the second half of the 20th century” in the Guardian. Her evocative solo debut of premiere recordings for the Innova label titled “Shadow Piano” was described as a “terrific album of dark, probing music” by the Chicago Reader.

Xenia’s work is recognised by a Diapason d’Or (France), Supersonic Award (Luxembourg), Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, PRS Foundation Women Make Music, Beyond Borders and New Music Biennial programmes as well as prizes from the New Zealand Arts Council and Canada Council for the Arts. She received the unanimous First Prize at the Xavier Montsalvatge International Piano Competition in Girona, Spain and prizes at the Messiaen International Piano Competition in Paris and the KeriKeri National Piano Competition of New Zealand.

Pestova’s commitment and dedication to promoting music by living composers led her to commission dozens of new works and collaborate with major innovators in contemporary music. Past projects include commissioning and performing in Arlene Sierra’s “Urban Birds” at the Southbank Centre (with Kathleen Supove and Sarah Nicolls, recorded for BBC Radio 3 and available on NMC Records), burning a piano with Annea Lockwood in Wales, performing double piano concerti under conductors Peter Hirsch, Peter Rundel and Arturo Tamayo, instigating and performing in the World Toy Piano Summit at Festival Rainy Days in Luxembourg (with Margaret Leng Tan and others), designing cutting-edge digital musical instruments at McGill University and collaborating on a new digital version of the analogue electronic processing required for Karlheinz Stockhausen’s epic masterwork “Mantra”. Current projects include a major commission for piano and electronics from Northern Irish composer Ed Bennett, collaboration with instrument maker ROLI on developing repertoire for the Seaboard, an innovative soft continuous keyboard, and commissioning new works for toy piano and Indian harmonium inspired by the warmth and intimacy of Indian classical music with Canadian tabla player Shawn Mativetsky. She is a Schoenhut toy piano concert artist and has championed many new works for this instrument. She is also the pianist of the London-based *rarescale* ensemble, performing frequently with low flute specialist Carla Rees.

Following childhood music education in Russia, Xenia’s studies took place with Judith Clark (Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand), Philip Mead and Ian Pace (London), Hakon Austbo (Amsterdam), Yvonne Loriod-Messiaen (Avignon and Paris), Louise Bessette (Montreal) and Sara Laimon at McGill University, where she was awarded a Doctor of Music degree. From 2011-2015 she was the Head of Performance at Bangor University, where she founded and

directed the highly successful INTER/actions Festival and Symposium for interactive electronic music. Currently, she is the Director of Performance at the University of Nottingham, and continues to mentor emerging musicians in workshops at conservatories and universities around the UK, Europe, Canada, New Zealand, USA and Brazil.

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Short Biography:

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Last updated in June 2015. Please discard all previous versions.