

## **SELECTED REVIEWS OF SVETLANA SMOLINA**

### **“Georgia Today” by Ivan Nechaev**

Svetlana Smolina was Grand in Variations on a Theme of Corelli Op. 42, her clarity and expressive depth highlighting the ability to instill a strong sense of musicality and technical control. In a magnificent Finale Svetlana and Vakhtang Kodanashvili delivered Suite No. 2, Op. 17 with technical precision and interpretative insight, highlighting the emphasis on collaborative musicianship and detailed interpretation.

### **“The Day, by Lee Howard**

The highlight of the evening had to be Sergei Rachmaninoff “Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini”, Op. 43, featuring the smoking hot playing of pianist Svetlana Smolina, who came out on stage in glittering red gown so beguiling that the audience chuckled when she sat in front of the keys. Never letting her concentration waver, Smolina proceeded to pounce on each note with either great ferocity or eager tenderness, majestically alternating between a clump of chords and a cascade of shimmering harp like high notes. This rhapsody is a real showpiece and the execution of the work was exquisite. Shimada wringing every last sentiment out of the string section while Smolina alternately marched and gambled up and down the keys right up until the humorous and unexpected ending. The audience gave Smolina and the orchestra one of the most extended standing ovations ever during an ECSO concert”.

### **iPalpiti concert in Disney Concert Hall, Mark Swed, Los Angeles Times**

Svetlana Smolina, an outstanding Russian pianist with a luxuriant tone, was the evening’s soloist. She caught both the flicker of the young Sun- god and also found urgency in the flashy solo part”

### **Chopin Spectacular lives up to its title, Gayle Williams, Richard Storm, Sarasota Herald Tribune**

“Smolina displayed full command and charmed her way through Preludes of op. 28... Playing with vigor and vitality, easily shifting from one mood to another, sure of technique and subtle phrasing. The second part of program was devoted to Etudes and Waltzes.. the pianist produced dazzling effects entirely appropriate to the genre...Smolina brought audience close to frenzy, just as dear Fryderick did in his concerts.”

**New York Times, Paul Griffiths,**

“Svetlana Smolina created a storming, breathing piano in Scriabin’s Fantasy in B minor...”

**Anthony Tomassini, New York Times**

“The performance (Stravinsky Les Noces) had plenty of fervor and clattering colors. Yet it was nuanced, dusky and organic. The soloists – dynamic pianist Svetlana Smolina was mesmerizing”

**TSAF 2019 Repin /Smolina/ Knyazev Review from “ Zapolyarnaya Pravda”**

<https://gazetazp.ru/news/gorod/11128-kontsertyi-repina.html>

“ The unique festival (Trans- Siberian Art Festival ) concert took place on April 2 in the city's concert hall, which was packed to capacity. Star guests, and this is Vadim Repin, who plays the Stradivarius violin, and his outstanding colleagues - cellist Alexander Knyazev and pianist Svetlana Smolina ..”

“ My partners (Svetlana and Alexander) are a constellation of musicians who love to play together. Alexander Knyazev is one of the giants of the festival. And it is always a special pleasure for me to be with them on the concert stage.” - Vadim Repin

The charismatic cellist and organist Alexander Knyazev, who does not part with the unique ancient instrument made by the Italian master Carlo Bergonzi, and the amazing pianist Svetlana Smolina, who performs on the world's leading venues, shared their impressions after the master classes. The masters noted the good level of training of novice musicians in Norilsk.

“ The concert of the stars, who gave an unforgettable performance of the works of romantic composers, inspired the Norilsk people, they called it a **true miracle**. “

**“ L’Unione Sarda” , by Fabio Marcello**

*The Concert with pianist Svetlana Smolina at the Teatro Lirico di Cagliari*

**“Vadim Repin, what a premium class! “**

One confirmation and one surprise. This is how one could summarize the chamber music evening that took place two days ago at the Teatro Lirico in Cagliari as the second event of the 2017 concert season.

The surprise of the evening was the Russian pianist Svetlana Smolina, statuesque in her long, fiery-red dress. Thanks to an excellent control of dynamics and timbre, Smolina found the right feeling with Vadim Repin (the two of them have been playing together since 2014), who from her singing appeared to gain mellifluousness and freshness along the way. The pianist from Novgorod did not suffer from the charismatic personality of her illustrious colleague and demonstrated a consolidated artistic maturity.

At the end, the two artists repayed the audience's enthusiasm with two elegant and applauded encores on tunes from „Eugene Onegin“ by Tchaikowsky.

### **“Vadim Repin tears it up at Koerner Hall”, Toronto Performing Arts Examiner / Recital with Vadim Repin, Koerner Hall/ Royal Conservatory**

Svetlana Smolina on the [piano](#), who more than held her own while presenting a contrasting style that was every bit as pleasing to watch.

...The next piece was a bit of an aural surprise. Ravel "Tzigane" — in that one there was an authenticity to the music that both Repin and Smolina provided, along with a vivacious energy that made it difficult to resist tapping your foot to.

During the second half there was a palpable connection between Repin and Smolina that suggested the two have been playing together longer than they have. They fed off each other beautifully, with one nodding for the other to begin and the synchronicity between them simply flawless. Their performance of the two [Tchaikovsky](#) pieces, "Meditation" and "Valse-Scherzo", embodied everything characteristic of the Russian's compositions: there was a larger-than-life aspect to it with bold brush strokes, and yet a sense that beneath the grandiosity there lay unrevealed secrets. Both Repin and Smolina glided over the passages easily, disguising the inherent difficulty in Tchaikovsky's notes as a rush of notes up is complicated by accidentals on the way down.

They made Stravinsky's "Divertimento" look just as easy to play. There's a flow and charm to this ballet suite that's not present in many of Stravinsky's other works and by being played first after the intermission, it's a pleasant bridge between the two halves.

It's a little difficult to believe that for Repin, with all his talent and renown, it was his first time at Koerner Hall. Judging by the enthusiastic adoration — which also resulted in an encore piece, Onegin's aria by Tchaikovsky — it certainly won't be his last.

### ***El Espectador* By Manuel Drezner “Repin launches the Cartagena festival”**

With a recital at the Colon Theater, the violinist Vadim Repin, accompanied by Svetlana Smolina, made a concert to launch the next Cartagena Music Festival, which will take place in January with the theme of "Paris and the French music of the early 1900s. "

Repin, of course, is one of the elite instrumentalists of our time and his program was excellent, since he made no major concessions and played three important sonatas, which together are hardly ever heard – the French one by Claude Debussy, the Russian one by Prokofiev, and the beautiful one by Belgian Cesar Franck. In addition to those three, we heard another Frenchman, Ravel with his virtuosic Tzigane, an effective piece that from long ago was the one that drew the most applause from the audience who were equally enthusiastic even in the middle of Frank's Sonata when they applauded at the end of the second movement.

Repin is undoubtedly a highest category artist and he made the versions of the pieces that he interpreted in a great depth and with a brilliant show of technique.

Smolina was up to the task and equally contributed to the recital being of a great musical category...

In the ten days of the festival, the people of Cartagena will have so much to enjoy.”

### **NY Steinway recital , Steinway Hall, NY**

<http://www.robertaonthearts.com/classicalCultural/idC79.html>

Tonight's Steinway Hall concert was poignant and awe-inspiring. The Schumann-Liszt *Widmung* was a romantic, yearning work, showcasing immediately Ms. Smolina's virtuosity and aplomb. She tore into the keyboard with confidence and poise. The Schumann *Arabesque in C major* was balletic in tempo, swirling with feverish dervish. Chords and volume shifted with drama. The Rachmaninoff *Variations on a Theme of Corelli* was also drama-driven, with the initial theme followed by brief treble trills and filmatic mystery. *Islamey* by Balakirev was approached with thrilling keyboard attacks, as the theme was evocative of birds swirling in flight. It had exotic, Asian infusions. But, it was the Strauss/Schulz-Evler *Concert Arabesque on a theme by J. Strauss, "On the Beautiful Blue Danube"* that brought the crowd to its feet. In between a fantasy theme that resembled a glass harmonica merging with a harp, the strains of the "Blue Danube Waltz" emanated with liquid languor and luscious luminosity. At times it evoked Ravel's *La Valse*, with its theatrical vibrancy and transfixing surreal-ness. Ms. Smolina sparked the imagination with the magic of this *Concert Arabesque*. After intermission, for the Tchaikovsky *Trio in A minor, "In Memory of a Great Artist"*, Ms. Smolina was joined by Mr. Daurov on cello and Mr. Morozov on violin. This Trio was [an homage to Tchaikovsky's friend Nikolai Rubenstein](#). Ms. Smolina once again introducing swirling, dreamlike musicality on the sumptuous Steinway. The "Andante flebile, ma non tanto" was then followed by the "Tempo di Mazurka" Variation, with supple and symmetrical measures. The "Moderato", then "Variazioni Finale e coda", were both replete with sensational string flourishes, that matched the first-class virtuosity of Ms. Smolina on the Steinway.

**Los Angeles Times, Daniel Cariaga,**

**PIANIST SHOW STRAVINSKY' CHARM**

“Smolina’s defining of the lyrical aspects in the music she played made her performance cherishable... “

**New York Magazine, NY**

Ms. Smolina has excellent technique –makes astute artistic choices playing with very relaxed and stable arm-and she is a stunning showperson, dressing in an elegant gown like Marlene Dietrich’s. The pair (with violinist Bela Horvath) work very well together and make beautiful music.

**Local Arts Live by Sharon Torello “Music at Monica’s”**

Smolina selected a mix of mostly romantic era music that contained so many rapid sequences that I'm quite sure I've never heard that many notes played on a piano in one concert before. The wonderfully balanced and lively acoustic of Saint Monica's sanctuary and a brand new Steinway piano helped to highlight her fiery performance. Smolina somehow managed to maintain solid melodic clarity even in through the most finger blurring passages. The engaged audience gave her a rousing standing ovation in the end, and it wasn't one of those, slowly rising "I guess I should stand because everyone else is" ovations. It was a genuine expression of appreciation to a supremely talented musician”.

**the Listener Magazine, New York, Patrick Meanor**

“Svetlana Smolina performed flawlessly Prokofiev First and Ninth Sonatas. She played these very challenging pieces with a facility and mastery that highlighted her impeccable technique and clarity of vision. Later the next evening she performed one of those phenomenally difficult arrangements by Mikhail Pletnev- of a section of “Nutcracker Suite”. Had I been in the other room, I might very well have mistaken it for Pletnev himself- it was so romantically rendered. The next evening, Svetlana Smolina performed the Four Etudes by Stravinsky (op.7) with a maturity and confidence that made those difficult pieces sparkle with youthful vitality.”

**International Herald Tribune, Davis Stevens**

“This was part of a survey of Rachmaninoff’s works for two pianos, which included the two suites brilliantly displayed by Maxim Mogilevsky and Svetlana Smolina, and the

playful “Polka Italiana” in which Smolina was joined by Alexander Korsantya... "Other highlights of this marathone included... the “Corelli Variations” with Smolina as the superb soloist.”

**International Herald Tribune, Davis Stevens**

“Svetlana Smolina sparkled with the Italian concerto, the E-minor Toccata and a Prelude and Fugue from the Well Tempered Clavier.”

**EYE CONTACTS ARE ENOUGH FOR COMMUNICATION, Martin Schrahn, Rugh Nachrichten, (Ruhr Klavier Festival)**

Smolina/ Mogilevsky impress as a coordinated duo in the best way- alone eye contacts are enough for communication... Amazing in all respects, their playing has expressive strength and sense for tone qualities.”

**Independent, the London, Laurence Hughes**

It was a relief to move on to the Four Etudes op. 7 – played with alternating deftness and thoughtfulness by Svetlana Smolina.. In the excerpts from The Firebird, Svetlana showed an energy and fire that were almost startling in so slight a frame... but any (orchestral) inadequacies were forgotten in the hushed intensity of those radiant chords leading into the final flourish... If Svetlana Smolina can be said to represent the future of Russian music, then surely we have nothing to fear for the great musical tradition of that remarkable country.”

**The Flint Journal**

“Svetlana Smolina played with astonishing dynamism and skill. Her rendition of the wildly difficult cadenza of Rachmaninoff 3 rd Concerto was most impressive”

**Covent Garden Magazine, London, Graham Watts**

And the pianist (Svetlana Smolina) thoroughly deserved the audience’s unrestrained praise.”

**“Wesdeutsche Allgemeine Zeiitung”, JAHRHUNDERTHALLE Bochum, Germany, Anja Renczikowski, (Ruhr Klavier Festival)**

“The culmination of the evening was the performance of the “Poeme de l’ extase” op. 54, for two pianos and the “Prometheus”, op. 60, for three pianos... interpreted by Alexander Toradze with Svetlana Smolina and Maxim Mogilevsky- an acoustical and visual sea of flames ( these works were recorded by WDR Westdeutscher Rundfunk television ) came very near to the messianist ideas of the composer).

**International Herald Tribune, David Stevens**

“Svetlana Smolina and Maxim Mogilevsky collaborated handsomely on the Concerto for Two Pianos, to wind up the opening session.”

**Financial Times, Andrew Clark**

“In the hands of Svetlana Smolina and Maxim Mogilevsky, Rakhmaninov’s Suite No. 2 for two pianos provided a formidable climax.”

**Herald Tribune, Michael Tumelty**

“Apparently demure and rather poetic Svetlana Smolina showed her teeth and muscles in a huge performance of one of the most interesting pieces of the long afternoon...”

**“PIANIST BRINGS AUDIENCE TO ITS FEET” Elkhart Truth, Marcia Fulmer**

It was the artistry of Svetlana that brought the audience to its feet... Mrs. Smolina was in complete control of the emotionally lyrical, technically intimidating work... Mrs. Smolina’s incredibly fluid- and incredibly strong- fingers invested each change of mood and movement with exactly the right texture, depth and sense of being...In Svetlana Smolina, Rachmaninoff’s Third found a perfect match.. She was phenomenal!”

**MARVELOUS IMAGE, IRON WILL, Nizhny-Novgorod Times, Ludmila Patiaeva,**

The image of a young lady immediately disappeared when Svetlana touched the keys. In Griffes Sonata the harsh pressure of the nervous motives interchanged with the falls into the silence, the madness and hope competed with each other for the right of the existence. The romantic contrasts, the falls and the raises especially impressed in the romantic Etudes of Chopin and in the Liszt “Mephisto Waltz”. The success of the entire concert was obvious: Svetlana Smolina presented herself as the professional of the highest rank.”

**GRAND RESULT ON STEINWAY”, New Jersey Star- Ledger, Peter Wynne**

Svetlana Smolina and Maxim dazzled all with the performances “Dumka”, Seasons”, Piano Sonata in G Major and Eugene Onegin for two pianos (Tchaikovsky). With two powerhouse players and two Grand Steinways on stage the sound could be overwhelming, but it did provide more than a hint of power... Watching the two perform was a delight... Nearly 35 minutes in performance, the G Major sonata requires a performer with power to spare. Smolina was up to the challenge, pouring massive waves of sound over her listeners in the works many dramatic moments. And yet she was equally capable of matching the composer’s more intimate thoughts.”