

SPECIAL FEATURE on NATALIA GUTMAN

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Birth: 14th November, 1942 - Kazan, Kazakhstan (former USSR)

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The Russian cellist, Natalia Grigoryevna Gutman, comes from a musical family. She was born in Kazan, Kazakhstan, at a time when the city was packed with the many Russian intelligentsia and artists who were then evacuated before the arrival of Hitler's troops. Her father first taught her, but in a short time her progress was so rapid that she was accepted into the Gnessin Music School, one of the leading music institutions for youngsters in Russia. Kosolupova was her teacher for five years, which she considers an especially important influence in her development.

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She won the first prizes in Moscow's Tchaikovsky Competition and the Dvorák Competition in Prague. Among many other awards she received 1967 the First Prize in the Munich ARD Competition - a prize which marks the beginning of her international career. However, for a considerable period of time, regular concert appearances in the West were rare; she tended to stay home while her husband, the also famous violinist Oleg Kagan, did more touring. In 1980 though, the two of them played the Johannes Brahms' Double Concerto at the Edinburgh Festival with the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Evgeny Svetlanov, which was her British debut.

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From the 1980's she increased her international appearances on all continents, being invited as a soloist by great conductors and orchestras. In 1985 she was particularly praised for a London performance of Prokofiev's Sinfonia Concertante for cello and orchestra; Robert Henderson of the Daily Telegraph said that not even Mstislav Rostropovich could have surpassed it - and I heard her play the same work at the Edinburgh Festival a couple of years previously and can vouch as to her power, control and personality playing this music.

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Natalia Gutman's repertoire comprises almost all of the literature for violoncello with but she is specially noted for emphasis on contemporary music. Together with Oleg Kagan she premiered Alfred Schnittke's Concerto Grosso No. 2 for Violin, Cello and Orchestra (1985) which the composer dedicated to the couple. Also Schnittke's first Cello Sonata (1978) and his first Concerto for Cello and Orchestra have been dedicated to her. She has regularly performed the Lutoslawski Cello Concerto.

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Natalia Gutman has always been very active in the field of chamber music; her regular recital partners have included the pianists Martha Argerich, Boris Berman, Felix Gottlieb, Irma Issakadze, Evgeny Kissin, Evgeni Koroliov, Vassily Lobanov, Alexei Lubimov, Alexander Melnikov, Sviatoslav Richter and Elisso Virsaladze, as well as with numerous violinists. In more recent years Natalia Gutman's concert schedule has focused on Europe and, in particular, one can mention France, Italy, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Germany.

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Apart from her international concert life, Natalia Gutman has also devoted herself to the younger generation, and she has given master-classes worldwide. Together with Claudio Abbado she initiated the 'Berlin Encounters' where young musicians are playing chamber music together with the 'stars'. Since 1991 she has been teaching at the Hochschule für Musik in Stuttgart. She has also taught for years in Moscow. As to teaching philosophies she considers extensive, regular, and thorough practice sessions to be essentials and unfailingly repeats the standard scale exercises.

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Natalia Gutman has recorded the two Shostakovich's Concertos with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under Yuri Temirkanov for RCA/BMG-Ariola. She has recorded the Dvořák Cello Concerto and other works for EMI with the Philadelphia Orchestra, conducted by Wolfgang Sawallisch, and the Schumann and Schnittke Cello Concertos with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Kurt Masur. In 2007 she recorded the Schumann Cello Concerto once again with Claudio Abbado in Italy. However, interestingly since the 1990's live performances of Natalia Gutman have been published on Live Classics - this label is now editing the Natalia Gutman 'Portrait Series' where her art and its development from the beginnings to the present day are being documented.

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In May 2005 German Federal President Köhler bestowed on Natalia Gutman the highest German decoration, "Bundesverdienstkreuz Erster Klasse," and in 2006 she was nominated to become a fellow of the Royal College of Music in London.

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as a PLAYER

Historical performance - Natalia Gutman & Sviatoslav Richter - Prokofiev Cello Sonata - video 1991, live at the Pushkin Museum in 1991.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zBJVcCnXnwk>

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as a TEACHER

Masterclass Gutman Violonchelo Haydn Concierto

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bM38zK82bH0&vl=es>

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‘documenting the cello’

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