

Irina Kulikova – Biography

(350 words)

Acclaimed for the rare beauty of her sound and her enchanting presence on stage, Irina Kulikova is one of the most captivating guitarists in the world. Her performances span across the globe, from prominent European festivals to significant stages in North America and Asia, including iconic venues like the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Moscow's Tchaikovsky Hall, Valencia's Palau de la Musica, Tokyo's Musashino Hall, and the Oriental Arts Center in Shanghai.

Irina's musical journey began at the tender age of five when she was introduced to the guitar and piano. Her mother, a distinguished cellist and pedagogue, was her first and most influential teacher. By the age of eight, Irina was already performing publicly, and by twelve, she had become a child prodigy, captivating audiences across Russia and impressing leading guitarists at European festivals. Her dedication to her craft led her to the Gnessins Academy in Moscow. She later graduated with high honors from both the prestigious Mozarteum University in Salzburg and the Conservatoire of Maastricht in the Netherlands.

Irina's talent and dedication opened doors to collaborations with eminent violinists, cellists, and pianists, sparking a deep passion for chamber music. She became a member of the illustrious 'Salzburger Solisten' and performed extensively with ensemble leader Luz Leskowitz and his Stradivarius, gracing stages across Austria and Germany. Her repertoire and grace earned her admiration from royal and aristocratic circles in Germany and Denmark.

Irina Kulikova received over 30 awards for her artistry, with coveted 1st prizes from the most prestigious competitions such as Michele Pittaluga in Italy, Guitarra Alhambra in Spain, Forum Gitarre Wien in Austria, and Iserlohn in Germany. She has recorded seven albums, with five under the expert guidance of Grammy-Award-winning producer, Norbert Kraft.

Beyond her performances, Irina's artistry serves as a beacon for guitar enthusiasts globally. A cherished mentor, she instills in her students and peers a profound appreciation of music, often through evocative master classes enriched with vivid imagery and wit. Her contributions extend to the inception of The Hague – Altamira Guitar Competition. Her resonant credo in life and music: *"It's about the touch."*