

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a light pink top and pants, is sitting in an ornate, light-colored chair. She is holding a guitar and looking towards the camera with a smile. The background features a large, ornate white door or wall paneling and a large bouquet of flowers in the upper left corner.

Irina Kulikova

It's about the touch

Special Guest

Feliks Volozhanin

cello

Chopin

Schubert

Satie

Debussy

Albéniz

Barrios

Tárrega

Fellendans

Vassiliev

Albinoni



It's about the touch

*Your finest touch, an enchanting start.
Today's love in tomorrow's hearts.*

When I was a kid, there was a wall dividing East and West. I didn't know. I was too young. I only noticed the effects after the wall had been taken down. Many Russian families struggled with the sudden changes of the post-communist economy. I was lucky to have a talent for music. I started performing in Russia at eight and was invited to festivals in Europe at twelve. It gave me the chance to make some extra money for our family. I would never want the same childhood for my daughter, Mariëlle, to whom I dedicate this album. She just turned eight this summer. But I do realise that the early start of my performing career has given me something special: music has brought me close to people from all over the world.

But in 2017, I was denied entry to the USA. An artist manager had made my visa invalid. Then, a series of actions had created a complex situation. For over half a year, there was a wall between me and my friends and students in California, a place I have considered my second home for years

already. It even came to the point where I was facing a lifetime bar from the USA. Thanks to Asgerdur Sigurdardottir, President of the Baltimore Classical Guitar Society and wife of Manuel Barrueco, the situation got solved.

In that stressful period, I found peace in all the beautiful moments with my daughter, in nature and in the music from composers that have always been near to my heart, like Debussy, Satie, Tárrega and Barrios. My motto in life and music made more sense than ever: *it's about the touch*. When you put your heart into all the little things that make life beautiful, you will be profoundly connected with the world around you. I feel it as a mother, as a musician and as a music coach.

I decided to share that intimate inspiration with a new album. Then, in the beginning of March 2020, right after recording it in Florida, I was told that my concert in Miami was cancelled due to COVID-19. Now, for over half a year already, people around the world are struggling with unbridgeable

distances. Of course, we are all connected digitally. I can raise the glass with my family in Russia, when they are having a barbecue, four thousand kilometers away. But it is just not the same as being there with them. And I can livestream a concert via YouTube or Facebook. But it is just not the same as the inspired interaction with an audience.

Life as we know it has dramatically changed for all of us. It brings a lot of insecurity and stress. We need to take our moments to find harmony and strength. I believe music can help. Music moves us with the joy and the pain, the passion and the serenity that once inspired great composers. What do you imagine when you hear *Clair de Lune* by Debussy? What do you feel when you hear *Valse* by Chopin? Where does Vassiliev take you with the *Magic Ship*? Those feelings bring us close to ourselves and close to people from all over the world. Music connects us.
It's about the touch.

Irina Kulikova
September 2020

Be as Beautiful as You

Mariëlle

(Be as Beautiful as You)

Music and lyrics: Wouter Fellendans

Arrangement for guitar: Konstantin Vassiliev

There was once a little girl with the brightest smiling eyes.
She'd giftwrap little kisses as surprise.
She'd send them by post to the men haunted by ghosts:
the roaring faces on TV, who needed them most.

Then she'd cuddle up to mom when nothing changed,
feeling a little astray.
'Mom, the postman does not go all that way.'
Here's what her mother would say.

'Just be as beautiful as you
and for someone your love will come through.
In the dreams that you pursue,
in the little things you do:
just be as beautiful as you.'

Then there was, in different times, an old lady in the sun,
enjoying a new spring that just had begun.
Turned silence into pearls. Made a necklace every day
of those little things you and I had forgotten to say.



Then she thought about her days in this world.
The roaring just hadn't changed much.
But when the postman came, her eyes again lit up:
someone had giftwrapped a beautiful touch.

Just be as beautiful as you
and for someone your love will come through.
In the dreams that you pursue,
in the little things you do:
just be as beautiful as you.

There was once a little girl with the brightest smiling eyes.
Telling you a fairytale for the night.
You yawn and you smile. Close your eyes now and sleep tight.
I caress your cheek. I love you.



Three Night Ballades

Konstantin Vassiliev

In the Shadow of the Sunset

Войди на закате, как в свежие волны,
В прохладную глушь деревенского сада, -
Деревья так сумрачно-странно
безмолвны.

И сердцу так грустно, и сердце не радо.

- Константин Бальмонт

Come into the garden, shady and wild.
Green ocean is so deep and endless.
At the hour of sunset, trees stand so silent
And my heart fills with whining sadness.

- Konstantin Balmont

Magic Ship

Когда мечтательно я предан тишине
И вижу кроткую царицу ясной ночи,
Когда созвездия заблещут в вышине
И сном у Аргуса начнут смыкаться очи...

- Афанасий Фет

When I sit dreaming, silence by my side,
And see the gentle queen of a clear night,
When constellations glitter in the sky
And eyes of Argos start shutting, by & by...

- Afanasy Fet

The Queen of the Clear Night

По синим волнам океана,
Лишь звезды блеснут в небесах,
Корабль одинокий несется,
Несется на всех парусах.

- Михаил Лермонтов

By the deep blue waves of ocean
As soon as stars shine bright,
The lonesome ship is rushing by
With sails blown tight.

- Mikhail Lermontov



Biography

Irina Kulikova Biography

"Wherever she performs, she plays her way into the hearts of her audience."

- Luz Leskowitz, violinist, director Salzburger Schlosskonzerte, Austria

Irina Kulikova was born in Chelyabinsk, the capital of South Ural, Russia. She started playing guitar and piano at five. At eight, she gave her first guitar performances. By the time she was twelve, she was a child star playing across Russia and at festivals in Europe. She received a scholarship from New Names, the United Nations program for talents. At fourteen, she appeared in Maurice Summerfield's book *The Classical Guitar, its evolution, players and personalities since 1800*.

She left home to study at the Gnessins Academy in Moscow and the Mozarteum University in Salzburg. A teenager still, she joined the Salzburger Solisten for chamber music festivals in Europe, including performances for the royal and aristocratic families of Denmark and Germany. She gave her first concert in the USA at eighteen.

After she made her home in The Netherlands in 2007, Ms. Kulikova graduated with distinction in Salzburg and later from the Royal Conservatory of Maastricht. In 2008, she was awarded first prize at the highly prestigious competitions of Michele Pittaluga in Italy, Guitarra Alhambra in Spain, Forum Gitarre Wien in Austria and Iserlohn in Germany. Subsequently, she was invited to over thirty countries. She appeared at leading festivals in Europe, North America and Asia, and in concert halls such as the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, the Tchaikovsky Hall in Moscow, the Musashino Hall in Tokyo and the Oriental Arts Center in Shanghai.

The beauty of Ms. Kulikova's playing has become iconic for guitarists around the world. She is a much appreciated mentor for conservatory students and fellow professionals. Inspired by working with them, in the near future she will open the online Academy *"It's about the touch"*. Extensive biography with photos and videos on www.IrinaKulikova.com

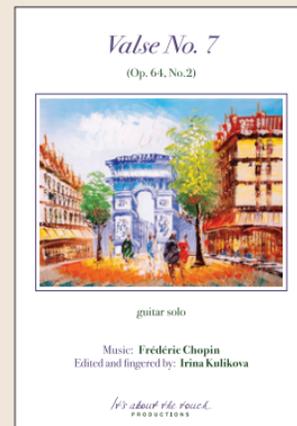
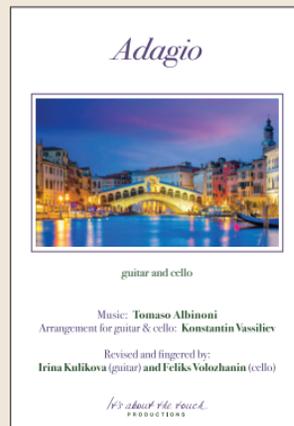
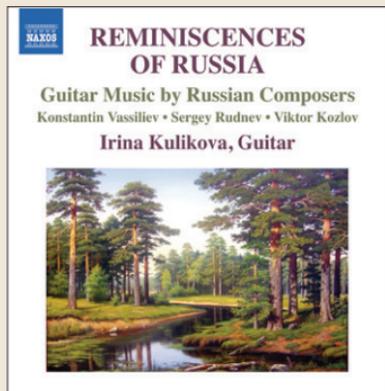
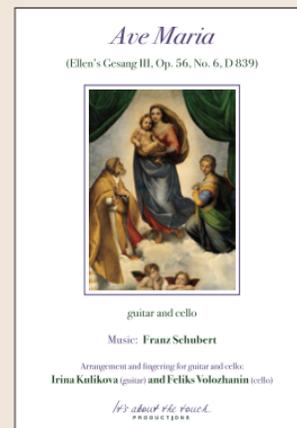
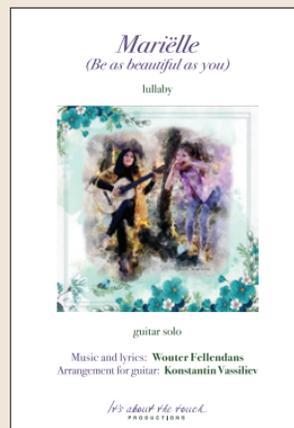
“Irina & Feliks”

Duo “Irina & Feliks”

The three pieces for guitar and cello on this album are the debut recording of the duo “Irina & Feliks”. Irina Kulikova has known Feliks Volozhanin since she was eight years old. They lived on the same street in Chelyabinsk, Russia, and attended the same music school. They met again in 2014 in California and started performing as a duo. They tour across the USA, including cities such as New York, Dallas, Austin and Miami.

Feliks Volozhanin began studying cello at the age of seven. At twelve, he became a laureate of Chelyabinsk State Youth Cello Competition and continued his studies at State Institute of Music in Moscow, Russia. Since moving to the United States, Mr. Volozhanin has won first prizes in many contests, including the Elizabeth Harper Vaughn, the Rapides Symphony and the SLU Concerto Competitions. Mr Volozhanin served as a principal cellist of the University Symphony Orchestra and the Cello Choir of the California State University Fullerton. He is the co-founder of the Russian School of Music in Irvine, California, USA.





Credits

Recorded on March 9th and 10th, 2020,
in the Fellowship Community Church, Englewood, Florida, USA
Session producer, engineering and digital editing: **Norbert Kraft**

Follow Irina Kulikova:
www.IrinaKulikova.com



Follow Feliks Volozhanin:
www.Volozhanin.com

Irina Kulikova plays a Simon Marty
guitar with a spruce top (2019).
She uses Cantiga premium
high-tension strings by



Feliks Volozhanin plays a
Franz Sandner cello

Photography Irina Kulikova: Yana Feldman, St. Petersburg, Russia
Photography Irina & Feliks: Aleksandra Barannikova, New York, USA
Photography Irina & Mariëlle: Arnold Fellendans, Wassenaar, The Netherlands
Three Night Ballades Translation: Aleksandra Akimova
Booklet & package design: Mark Counts / mdcounts@comcast.net

Editions: 1-3. Chopin, Albinoni, Schubert: *it's about the touch productions* |
4. **Schubert:** Chanterelle | 5. **Albéniz:** Muzika | 6-8. **Vassiliev:** Les Productions d'Oz |
9. **Fellendans/ Vassiliev:** *it's about the touch productions* | 10. **Debussy:** Gitarre und Laute |
11-13. **Barrios:** Zen-On | 14. **Satie:** Salabert | 15-18. **Tárrega:** Chanterelle

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I'd like to dedicate Serenada by F. Schubert to Dr. Arturo Jasso, professor of Spanish American and Brazilian Literatures, California State University, Fullerton, USA.

I'd like to dedicate Clair de Lune by C. Debussy to Feliks' father, Boris Aleksandrovich Volozhanin, chess coach and poet (1939-2016).

And I'd like to dedicate Capricho Árabe by F. Tárrega to Mark Counts, who made my dream come true with the beautiful design for this booklet.



It's about the touch

