

Violinist Natasha Korsakova Joins Triangle Artists for a Glorious Afternoon of Music

If one believes that art imitates nature, this recital served as the perfect example. Outside [St. Michael's Episcopal Church](#) in Raleigh, late afternoon light illuminated the leaves so the colors were spectacular. Inside the nearly packed sanctuary, music lovers listened to great music performed by a stellar group of players. Featured violinist [Natasha Korsakova](#) was joined by guest artists [Kevin Kerstetter](#), organ, [Ariadna Nacienceno](#), piano, and [Katherine Kaufman Posner](#), soprano. They offered works by Tomaso Antonio Vivaldi (1663-1745), Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750), Henri Vieuxtemps (1820-81), and Astor Piazzolla (1921-92).

Natasha Korsakova has deep musical roots. She has appeared on the world stage with major orchestras and has made a substantial number of recordings. With all this experience and training, Ms. Korsakova demonstrated a genuine ease on the stage. Engaging with her audience, she has the grace and charm of a fully developed superstar.

Korsakova's repertoire is impressive, and the afternoon's recital pieces were well chosen. She began with Tomaso Antonio Vivaldi's Chaconne, a piece greatly loved by violinists but with an uncertain authorship because of the unusual modulations. Heifetz, who played lots of arrangements, also performed it. This arrangement with organ worked particularly well in the sanctuary. I closed my eyes, imagining myself in Italy. Her instrument, made in 1765 by [Vincenzo Panormo](#), sounded beautiful, particularly on the bass side. Her open G string is deep and rich. Notes on the E string shimmered. With flawless technique, Korsakova made the instrument sing. Organist Kevin Kerstetter played with great sensitivity until the very last variation (marked *forte*), where the organ overpowered the violin. The audience approved, however, and offered plenty of applause.

Vivaldi's work was just the warm-up for J.S. Bach's Chaconne for solo violin, one of the great works for the instrument. Korsakova marked it with her own style, playing the inner rhythms with speed and great clarity; like a master painter, she treated the perilous string crossings as if she were dabbing them with a brush. She smiled frequently as if to say, "I'm in love with this music." This piece can sound like a labored war horse on a violin with a modern set-up. Not so for this violinist!

Korsakova played two pieces with Adrianna Nacienceno: the famous Ballade and Polonaise, Op. 38, by the 19th century Belgian violinist and composer, Henri Vieuxtemps, and [Astor Piazzolla's](#) "Grand Tango," a piece Gidon Kremer made popular with his *Hommage à Piazzolla* (1996). The two artists played together like dancers, capturing the exotic feel of the tango. I was disappointed in their choice to close the piano lid, which squashed the beautiful overtones, especially from the upper registers. Nevertheless, I was impressed with their fine collaboration and sheer joy in performing together. I hope they do more.

In response to the enthusiastic audience cry for more, the duo returned for an excerpt of "Grand Tango." Their performance was, again, marvelous.

Korsakova and Kerstetter accompanied the wonderful soprano Katherine Kaufman Posner in "Erbarne dich" from J.S. Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*. All told, it was a glorious afternoon of music.

Korsakova will travel to other destinations on the East Coast [this month](#). On behalf of her friends in North Carolina, I wish her well.

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