



ANNA SMERDOVA

Creating Stories and Emotional Worlds

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Thirteen-year-old Czech pianist Anna Smerdova currently studies at the Tiziano Rossetti International Music Academy under Professor Maria Narodytska. Having received wide recognition in international music competitions, she has performed in notable venues across Europe and the United States, including Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall and the Prague Spring Festival. In this conversation, Anna reflects on her early musical influences, her artistic work with her teacher, and her ambitions for crafting solo recital programs across musical eras.



WHAT FIRST DREW YOU TO THE PIANO, AND WHAT MADE PLAYING IT SO EXCITING FOR YOU WHEN YOU WERE FIRST STARTING OUT?

I was drawn to the piano at a very young age thanks to my grandmother Eva, who was a lifelong piano teacher. Sitting next to her and listening to the music fill our living room felt magical—almost like opening a secret door into another world. What excited me most in the beginning was discovering that each key had its own personality and vibrant color. Realizing that I could create whole stories and emotional worlds with just my own ten fingers made practicing feel like an endless adventure.

YOU HAVE PERFORMED IN SO MANY DIFFERENT VENUES—IS THERE ONE CONCERT OR PERFORMANCE SO FAR THAT STANDS OUT AS ESPECIALLY MEMORABLE TO YOU?

Performing in the Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall in New York is definitely an experience that stands out above all others. Standing on a stage steeped in so much legendary musical history felt both profoundly humbling and deeply inspiring. The hall's acoustics are remarkable, and from the very first chord, I felt an extraordinarily warm and intimate connection with the audience. Sharing my music in such an iconic venue made every single hour of dedicated practice feel deeply meaningful.

WHEN WORKING WITH YOUR TEACHERS, MARIA NARODYTSKA AND IVO KAHÁNEK, WHAT IS ONE KEY LESSON THAT HELPED YOU GROW MOST AS A PIANIST?

My time with Professor Ivo Kahánek was essentially a valuable series of masterclasses over the course of a single year—nearly three years ago—through the MenART scholarship program, which concluded with a performance at the Prague Spring Festival. It was an inspiring experience early on, especially in learning how to let melodies sing naturally with breath and phrasing.



However, the true heart of my musical development and ongoing artistic growth lies with the Tiziano Rossetti International Music Academy and Professor Maria Narodytska. I was fortunate to win the opportunity to study with Maria as a special prize at one of the Academy's competitions, and that moment truly transformed my path. The Academy provides an inspiring environment, and with Maria, I found a teacher with whom I resonate on a deeply personal and musical level. Studying with her is a profound journey—she doesn't just teach me how to play, she shapes how I perceive sound, emotion, and musical truth. She showed me that absolute discipline and creative freedom belong together, and she constantly inspires me to dig deeper into the soul of every piece. Her trust, dedication, and energy have given me so much, and she is the teacher who truly defines who I am as a pianist today.

WHEN YOU STEP AWAY FROM THE PIANO, WHAT HOBBIES OR ACTIVITIES DO YOU ENJOY DOING MOST IN YOUR FREE TIME?

When I step away from the piano, drawing is definitely my favorite way to unwind and express myself. Visual art feels very close to music—instead of tones and dynamics, I work with lines, colors, and textures, which allows my imagination to wander in a completely different, peaceful way. Aside from drawing, I love getting lost in a good book, listening to various music genres, and spending quiet time with my friends and family. When we travel or take walks, I especially enjoy observing architecture and new places, which always gives me fresh inspiration when I sit back down at the keys.

WHAT MUSICAL DREAMS OR NEW EXPERIENCES ARE YOU MOST EXCITED TO EXPLORE OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS?

Looking ahead over the next few years, I am especially eager to build and present my own full-length solo recitals. I love creating programs that build a dynamic dialogue across eras—connecting the clarity of the Classical period with the deep emotion of Romanticism, while also exploring the vibrant colors and rhythmic energy of 20th-century composers. Alongside solo recitals, one of my greatest dreams is to perform more frequently with symphony orchestras and experience the musical synergy of sharing a stage with a conductor and forty or fifty musicians. Diving deeper into monumental piano concertos and bringing that energy to audiences in concert halls around the world is what excites me most.

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