

# Guevara & Zhelezova Piano Duo

## Biography

Hailed for their dynamic interpretations, powerful stage presence, and elegance, the Guevara & Zhelezova Piano Duo has been praised as “impeccable, simply wonderful!” (*El Sol de Orizaba*, Mexico), “...great display of talent” (*Diario De Morelos*, Mexico), “...exotic, stunning and sensual” (*Atencion San Miguel*, Mexico). Acclaimed for their “wonderful sense of dialog and balance” (*American Record Guide*), the unique duo combines the cultural heritages and temperaments of Latin America and Eastern Europe and is committed to delivering an exhilarating experience to audiences worldwide by bringing a vast repertoire and original programming, ranging from Baroque to newly-commissioned works.

Mexican pianist Citlalli Guevara and Bulgarian pianist Slavina Zhelezova, both winners of prestigious international competitions and awards, began their musical collaboration in 2009 as two young pianists in the Bell'arte Foundation Program based in Brussels. Working closely under the tutelage of Philippe Entremont and Nelson delle Vigne Fabbri, the two immediately bonded based on their shared vision for the unique artistic potential of the music for duo piano. The duo debuted to a standing ovation at the Palm Beach International Piano Festival (Palm Beach Atlantic University, USA) in 2009.

The duo's debut CD, *Midnight Conversations*, released in 2017 by Centaur Records, has received high praise for the wide range of four-hand selections, including the duo's own arrangements of Piazzolla's tangos. The album has been acclaimed for the duo's “daring,” “virtuosic,” and “blistering” interpretations (*Piano News*, 2/2018), “velvety,” “gorgeous,” and “opulent” sound, and “brilliant performance that's a lot of rollicking fun” (*American Record Guide*, March/April 2018).

Most recent performance highlights include Poulenc Double Concerto with Xalapa Symphony Orchestra (Xalapa, Mexico), recitals at the *El Blanco y Negro International Piano Festival* (Sala Blas Galindo Centro Nacional de las Artes, Mexico City) and the Duo Cycles Series (Simon Bolivar Amphitheater, Mexico City). Additional performance highlights include the highly-acclaimed Mexican premiere of Schnittke's four-hand concerto with the Guanajuato Symphony Orchestra (Guanajuato, Mexico), Schnittke Concerto with Zacatecas Symphony Orchestra (Zacatecas, Mexico) and Xalapa Chamber Orchestra (Xalapa, Mexico); four-hand recitals at the classical series at the legendary Cornelia Street Café (New York City), Harvard Club of New York City, and the *Pro-Musica Concert Series* in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. In 2009, the

duo gave the Taiwanese premiere of Ziegler's arrangements of selection of Piazzolla's tangos (Taichung, Taiwan).

The duo has also appeared with various orchestras in Mexico including Puebla Symphony Orchestra, Sonora Philharmonic Orchestra (Hermosillo, Mexico) and Michoacan Symphony Orchestra (Morelia, Mexico.) Festival performances have included Schumann-Chopin International Piano Festival (Cuernavaca, Mexico), Palm Beach International Piano Festival (Palm Beach, USA), Taiwan National Orchestra Summer Festival (Taichung, Taiwan) and Xalapa International Summer Festival (Xalapa, Mexico). In addition, the duo has toured Mexico extensively with many sold-out and broadcasted performances, including Teatro del Estado (Xalapa), Teatro Clavijero (Veracruz) and Teatro Ocampo (Cuernavaca).

In August 2018, the duo realized a longtime dream in launching the first edition of the Xalapa International Festival and Academy, of which they are co-founders and artistic directors. The grand forum included recitals, orchestral concerts, international piano competition, and masterclasses, and gathered international luminaries such as Philippe Entremont, Jorge Federico Osorio, Xalapa Symphony Orchestra, and Maestro Lanfranco Marcelletti, along with young international pianists. The duo is preparing the next edition of the festival in Summer 2020.

In addition to their duo pursuit, both enjoy successful international career as soloists and chamber musicians. Citlalli earned her Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Veracruz and Master of Music Degree at the Manhattan School of Music; Slavina holds Bachelor of Music degree from the Mannes College of Music and Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts Degrees from the Manhattan School of Music.

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