

About the Artist

Kadisha Onalbayeva

“Kadisha Onalbayeva maximizes the intricate fascination of each work with obvious familiarity and proficiency. ...expanded one note or chord for shifting tempi, masterfully, with lovely blended tones. ...expertise and electricity. ...sumptuous evocations of sorrow, longing, romance, and elegance.” (Dr. Roberta E. Zlokower, Solo Piano Recital at Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall, New York)

Steinway Artist Kadisha Onalbayeva was born in Zhetisay, Kazakhstan and began her musical training at the age of five. She is the first pianist from Kazakhstan to be named a Steinway Artist. She attended the Zhubanov Special School for Children in Almaty, Kazakhstan and while at Zhubanov, she studied piano and composition, gave piano recitals and was involved in both piano and composition festivals and competitions. Awards include the Soviet Union’s New Talent competition and various prizes in national piano competitions and Central Asia piano competitions. She also participated in international music festivals in Germany, Russia, and Uzbekistan. After graduating from the Zhubanov School, Kadisha entered the Kurmangazy National Conservatory of Music. She was awarded the Kazakh President’s Award for Young Artists and Chevron’s Award for Talented Students in piano and composition.

Kadisha Onalbayeva continued her performances as a recitalist, chamber musician, composer, and as an orchestral soloist. She received a Soros Prize for her work in the development of international cultural exchanges. She earned two Master of Musical Arts degrees in both composition and piano performance at the University of New Orleans. She then received her Doctor of Musical Arts in piano performance at Louisiana State University. Throughout her career, Onalbayeva has been a strong supporter of new music and she has been particularly interested in introducing the music of Kazakhstan to audiences in the United States. She currently performs her music and participates in international new music festivals as a composer, performer and organizer throughout Central Asia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Russia, Europe, Costa Rica, Bahamas and the United States.

She was commissioned to write a symphonic poem titled “Zherym” (My Motherland) by the Kazakhstan National Orchestra. She premiered Artyk Toxsanbayev’s Rhapsody for Piano and Orchestra (dedicated to her) with the Astana Philharmonic Orchestra, Kazakhstan and Albany Symphony Orchestra, Albany, Georgia, USA. Another composition dedicated to Dr. Onalbayeva composed by her husband, Michael Coleman, entitled “Arman” (Dream) and premiered it with the Louisiana Sinfonietta in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA.

The Minister of Culture of the Republic of Kazakhstan filmed a documentary on the life and musical career of Dr. Onalbayeva titled Independent National’s Heritage which was released in both Kazakh and in Russian. Onalbayeva recorded four works for Steinway’s Spirio recording project at Steinway Hall in New York, NY. She was awarded an Artist Fellowship Grant from the Alabama State Council on the Arts she performed a solo recital at Carnegie Hall. She recorded “Ligeti Light” for solo piano by Lawrence Moss on his CD “New Dawn” released through Innova. She received the “Glad Robinson Youse Adult Composer Award” in 2019 for her solo piano composition “Think...Together.” Onalbayeva composed the theme song “Alla” for the internationally acclaimed documentary “Alla, Muse of Dior” and she released a new solo piano CD, “Think...Together” in 2021, which includes original compositions and arrangements by Onalbayeva. She was a score-call winner in Festival Osmose 2021 (Belgium) where her piano

work. Kadisha Onalbayeva was inducted into the Steinway & Sons Teacher Hall of Fame at the Steinway Factory, New York, USA in 2022 and she was also a Nappie Award winner: Best Local Classical Musician in Mobile, Alabama.

Dr. Onalbayeva is the Director of Piano Studies and Professor of Music at the University of Mobile and is founder and currently serves as President of the Gulf Coast Steinway Society (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, & Mississippi). She is currently a member of the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA), National Federation of Music Clubs (NFMC), Southeastern Composers League (SCL), Schumann Music Club (SMC), and Mobile Music Teachers Association (MMTA).

In 2024 Dr. Kadisha Onalbayeva was recently awarded First Degree Diploma in the National Professional Category of the XVII Golden Key Piano Composition Competition.

She resides in Alabama and Florida with her husband, Michael Coleman, also a composer and pianist. She has one daughter, Malika (Zach), and granddaughter Dorothy and grandson John!