

## Biography

Originally from Eastern Europe, Vera Zholondz was born on December 30, 1989 in Voronezh, Russia.

Growing up in a rich musical environment, Vera started playing the piano and the violin, as well as singing in the youth choir at the age of 4 in the Children's School of Arts in her hometown. At age 7, Vera entered Voronezh School of Music for gifted children, studying violin and piano, as well as singing in the Voronezh School of Music Concert Choir, where she sang for 7 years. Vera began playing in ensembles and orchestras at the age of 11, constantly performing as a soloist. In addition, Vera often participated in Regional piano and violin conferences and master classes. Just a few years later, at the age of fifteen, Vera started teaching music lessons to her first students and working as a violinist in Voronezh Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra. At the same time, she also worked as a violinist at a jazz club, where young musician played famous pop and jazz tunes. In the following year, she won the First Prize at the Open Regional Competition in Voronezh, Russia (2006), dedicated to Mozart's 200<sup>th</sup> Birthday. In 2008 Vera received a High School Diploma with Highest Honors from the Voronezh Professional School of Music (violin, piano minor).

At age of 18, Vera received a full scholarship to attend Alcorn State University. During her first year in United States, Vera was selected among 50 people from the US and abroad to attend the National Symphony Orchestra Summer Music Institute in Washington, D.C., performing at the Kennedy Center as part of chamber groups and orchestra, as well as attending seminars with members of National Orchestra and private lessons with Peter Haase, second violin of the National Symphony Orchestra. In the same year Vera was selected to participate in the National Collegiate Honors Council's 44<sup>th</sup> (2009) and 46<sup>th</sup> (2011) annual conference in Washington, D.C. and Phoenix, Arizona. Also, Vera became a part of the ASU Concert Choir, frequently serving as a violinist for various performances. In addition, Vera played jazz piano in ASU Jazz Band. As soon as Vera joined the ASU Department of Music as a student in 2008, she's become a part of the ASU Annual National Jazz Festival, assisting Dr D.Miller, Festival Director, with the organization of this event. Vera also served as a member of Natchez Little Theater, performing as a part of instrumental group in musicals. In addition, she regularly worked as a violinist in part time orchestras. While in Mississippi, Vera taught a piano studio at the Universal Language School of Music with over twenty students and served as an alto section leader and pianist at the First Presbyterian Church in Natchez, Mississippi.

A versatile musician, Vera won prizes in a number of regional and national competitions, including MTNA state competition (2010 and 2011) and national competitions (Mississippi State Representative 2009 – 2010), Tennessee State National HBCU Piano Competition (First Prizes in 2010 and 2011), Alcorn State University National Piano Competition (2010 and 2011, 2012.) Vera has participated in numerous piano master classes: for instance, she has had master classes with concert pianists Christopher O'Riley, Mikhail Yanovitskiy, Jonathan Levin, and Nancy Weems.

Vera has received her Bachelor of Music Degree from Alcorn State with highest honors in May, 2012. Also, she has completed her Master's Degree in Piano Performance at Louisiana State University with 4.0 GPA in 2014. While in graduate school at LSU, Vera served as a pianist for the LSU Wind Ensemble, an organist and pianist at First Christian Church, and music instructor at "SuperMusic" Music Studios. She also often appeared as a section violinist in performances with the local symphony orchestras (Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra, Lake Charles Symphony and Acadiana Symphony Orchestra) While in Baton Rouge, Vera has appeared in numerous concerts as a solo performer as well, including her performance on the legendary Vladimir Horowitz's Steinway piano at the Crown Plaza Hotel in Baton Rouge in April 2013 and a performance with Lang Lang in February 2014 in River Center Concert Hall in

Baton Rouge, La. Vera graduated with her Doctorate of Musical Arts Degree from LSU on August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

Currently Vera serves as full time music faculty member at Louisiana Academy of Performing Arts and consistently performs as pianist, violinist, organist and vocalist. Vera has recently done a performance with Trisha Yearwood (March 2020, Baton Rouge, LA) and also has given several local concerts with her brother Anton Zholondz, performing an all – Piazzolla program. She is also currently serving as an accompanist for Northlake Performing Arts Society and plans to start her music director position at First Methodist Church in Covington, LA in August 2021.