

## Nelli Shkolnikova

Born in the tiny village of Zolotonosha in the Ukraine, future Professor of Violin Nelli Shkolnikova moved with her family at the age of three to a suburb of Moscow. Her father, an itinerant violinist, was often away from home. On one return he brought the three-year-old Nelli a small, almost toy-like violin. Nelli was rapt with excitement in learning how to play her new gift. Over the course of the next few months it became obvious to everyone, especially her father, that Nelli was destined to be a violinist.

At the age of five she entered the world-famous Moscow Conservatory, where she began her long musical journey. At age eight she played her first concerto with orchestra, and by 25 had won the Grand Prix at the prestigious Marguerite Long-Jacques Thibaud competition in Paris. Nelli's performance in Paris launched her into an international career. During the course of three major U.S. tours, she appeared at Lincoln Center and with the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy, and attracted critical acclaim and enthusiasm everywhere she played. She performed with great conductors including Munch, Mazur, Comissiona, Krips, Cluytens, Sanderling, Rozhdestvensky, Temirkanov, and many others.

Nelli's successes on the classical stage, especially her appearances in the West, made Soviet authorities nervous and very suspicious. In 1970 the Iron Curtain closed on her, and all her future performances were confined to the U.S.S.R. In 1982 she finally received permission to travel to West Berlin for a concert. On the fateful day of November 26, 1982, Nelli defected to the West, bringing with her only the clothes she wore and her violin—and of course, her enormous talent. She settled first in Melbourne, Australia, where she began concertizing and teaching again. Throughout her career Nelli was a sought-after teacher. Even in the Moscow Conservatory she was teaching her fellow students and helping her own teacher with preparing his students for their lessons. In Melbourne she taught at the Victorian College of the Arts; and in 1987, after receiving a rave letter on her behalf from Isaac Stern, the administration of the Indiana University School of Music asked her to join the world-famous institution as professor of violin. During her tenure at IU, Nelli has gained renown as a teacher and presenter of master classes. Her style of teaching is warm but demanding, and she holds her students to the highest artistic standards, helping them achieve flawless technique, impeccable taste, and a rich tone, characteristic of the Russian string tradition.

In her retirement Nelli now looks forward to more time to pursue some of her other interests. She loves to cook, but because she is a perfectionist, her culinary efforts demand a great deal of time and attention to detail—just like her music-making and teaching. Now she can devote much time to producing many new tasteful triumphs. She also loves home decorating, and this will become a very practical as well as personal skill as she relocates to Melbourne this year and begins her life there anew. She plans to continue to teach in Melbourne, but on a limited basis. Mainly she wishes now to savor life, read more, relax with friends, and occasionally take in a movie. Those of us who know Nelli here in Bloomington wish that all these things will come to pass for her, and we congratulate the many friends she has in Melbourne on their good fortune in having her back.

Lawrence Hurst