

Ksenija Komljenović
Long Bio [600 words]

Dr. Ksenija Komljenović (Belgrade, Serbia), a prizewinner of the International Percussion Competition Luxembourg, is a percussionist, educator, and composer. Ksenija's musical journey has taken her across continents, performing, teaching, and studying in Europe, the United States, and Asia. She holds the distinction of being the first woman from Serbia to earn a Doctor of Musical Arts in Percussion Degree.

In Fall 2023, Ksenija joined the esteemed faculty at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, following four years of teaching at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. In recent years, she has been recognized for her performances in Hong Kong, England, Spain, Portugal, Russia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Poland. As a performer and an educator, she has presented hundreds of concerts and conducted over 50 masterclasses, continuing her mission to mentor aspiring musicians worldwide.

One of the hallmarks of Ksenija's career is her devotion to contemporary and chamber music, as well as her commitment to fostering intercultural collaborations. She has formed outstanding chamber ensembles, such as Vesna Duo and PNEUMA, which bring together exceptional performers from five countries. With a creative spirit and a thirst for innovation, she enriches her ensembles' repertoire with daring arrangements that blend classical, contemporary, jazz, and folk music.

One of Ksenija's notable achievements is her arrangement of Igor Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* for marimba and piano, featured on Vesna Duo's debut album. The rendition received high praise from critics and experts:

"...impressively reconfigured for keyboard and marimba by percussionist Ksenija Komljenović." - Tim Page, Pulitzer Prize winner, *The Wall Street Journal*

"Crazy? You got it." - Norman Lebrecht, *Slippedisc*

"The energy and excitement that sizzles between the artists creates some jaw-dropping moments." - Keziah Jones, *Reader's Digest UK*

"The sheer passion for this project, in all of its facets, shines through with great clarity." - Steven Schick, Distinguished Professor of Music at the University of California, San Diego

Beyond her musical endeavors, Ksenija has been a driving force behind pioneering cultural-exchange projects between the U.S. and Serbia. She facilitated the first drumline camp and contemporary percussion workshop in her home country, contributing to the advancement of percussion education. She has a history of dedicating her time to creating opportunities for others, whether it be through organizing festivals [SoundWaves Music Festival 2021 and 2022], competitions [Tierras South Texas Percussion Competition 2022, director], or co-producing a podcast [At Percussion Podcast 2019-2022].

As a composer, Ksenija strives to explore her Slavic and Balkan roots. Notably, her recent work *Slavdom for Wind Band*, commissioned by ten universities in the US, premiered in Arkansas in November 2022. Her composition *Epilog [Epilogue]*, a collaborative work with dancers, was featured in the ceremonial reopening of the annex of the Memorial Museum of Ivo Andrić (a Yugoslav Nobel Prize winner) in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Ksenija holds degrees from the Frost School of Music at the University of Miami, Illinois State University, and the Faculty of Music in Belgrade, Serbia. Her primary teachers include Svet Stoyanov, Matthew Strauss, Dr. David Collier, dr Srđan Palačković, and Miroslav Karlović. She is a Marimba One Artist.



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