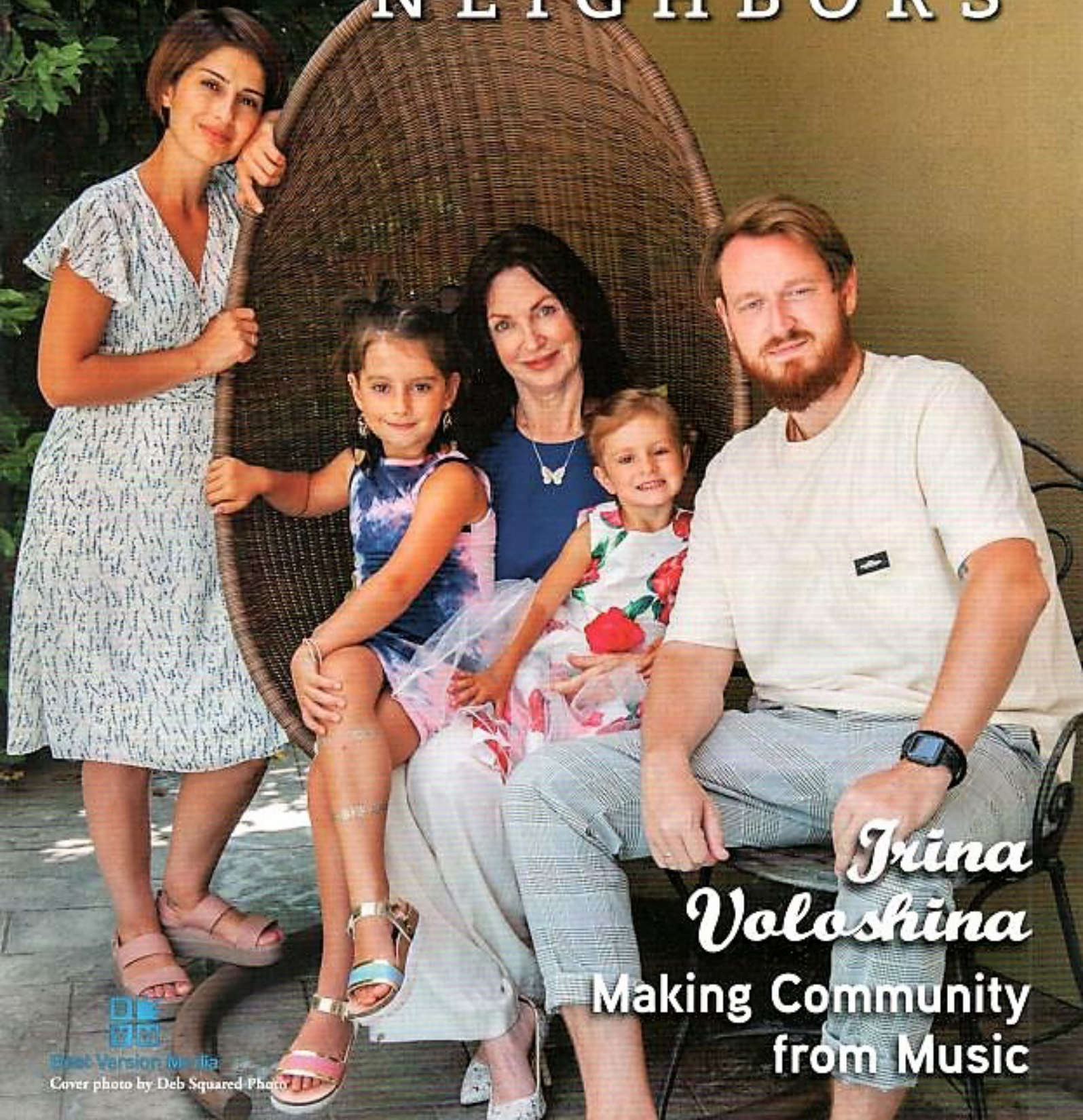


November 2021

Altadena

NEIGHBORS



Irina
Voloshina
Making Community
from Music



West Version Media
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Irina Voloshina
**Making Community
 from Music**

By Debbi Swanson Patrick
 Photos by Deb Squared Photo

*We would like to thank the
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 sponsoring the family feature story.*

Music is a balm to the soul. And nothing is more wonderful than having music being played by live musicians in your own little part of Altadena. And so, Melodia Mariposa Concert Series was created by Irina Voloshina, an accomplished violinist who has been collaborating with orchestras such as the LA Opera, Pasadena Symphony and Pops, LA Chamber Orchestra, and the California Philharmonic since she moved from Odessa, Ukraine in 1993. There she graduated from the Odessa State Conservatory with a master's degree in Violin Performance and Pedagogy and served in the Odessa Philharmonic for nine years.

Since living here she's recorded for over 600 film scores, music videos, albums with Barbra Streisand, Paul McCartney, Rod Stewart, and others, along with performing for "American Idol" and the Academy Awards.

During 2020 and 2021, she has organized dozens of concerts on her driveway on Mariposa to ease the malaise of the pandemic. Unfortunately, she and her entire family eventually got COVID this summer and had to suspend several July and August concerts. Thankfully they've all recovered and are back in musical action.

The concerts were on Saturdays but in July this year she switched the events to Sundays. Concert #58 was scheduled for September 19th.

The idea was simple, she says, "to bring the live music to our community during a challenging time for everyone.

"We started in early April 2020 with violinist Lisa Sutton, and cellist Tina Soule, (who both live in Altadena and are my

business colleagues) performing two times a week on Wednesdays and Saturdays. The Littles -- Carrie, Dane, and Morgan -- and Michele Zhukovsky joined us later. We played almost 40 concerts last year. People would drive from Woodland Hills, Encino, Hollywood, Sierra Madre to hear our concerts. And that was very special for all of us."

The concerts are a labor of love. And one was particularly noteworthy.

"It was a World Premiere of four compositions by Thomas Griselle, arranged for the small orchestra and conducted by Larry Blank, Resident Pasadena Pops conductor," says Irina. "Michael Feinstein, the multi-platinum-selling, two-time Emmy and five-time Grammy Award-nominated entertainer, and Principal

Pasadena Pops conductor, led the concert, educating and charming the audience. It was an unforgettable experience and incredibly generous presentation of such incredibly talented artists."

"Another memorable concert," says Irina, "featured a rare ensemble of soprano (Lisa Vroman) and eight cellists/cello octet

(Steve Erdody, Arntsen Ksajikian, Giovanna Moraga, Evgeny Tonkha, Dane Little, Tina Soule, Michael Kauffman, Vanessa Freebairn-Smith) and was dedicated to our colleagues who are no longer with us. It was unforgettable performance."

Irina has lived in Altadena for 10 years, having moved here in 2011. She absolutely loves it here. "I love hiking and we're so close to the trails. There's so much peace and quiet and I love the beautiful Altadenans. There are a lot of colleagues from the music business who live here."

She has put them all to work in her popular concerts! "This year we've done 17 concerts already with more musicians and will keep continue performing on Sundays," she says. "All our concerts are free. And it

has become like I was visioning—a community event. With 40 musicians participating, the concerts sometimes bring up to 200 people attending."

A friend of hers wrote that "audience members include families with young children, people with dogs in tow, friends



Irina Voloshina received a Certificate of Congressional Recognition for being a Hometown Hero during the Pandemic establishing her Melodia Mariposa concerts from her driveway.



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and neighbors. People sit on the curb, sit on folding chairs in the parkway and stand in any available open space. The finest music played by some of the nation's best musicians compete with helicopters, parrots and crows, emergency vehicles' sirens blaring on nearby streets, and passing cars. Through all the distractions the audience has remained loyal and attentive, a testament to the need for live music in our lives. Irina has offered her beloved Altadena something very special. Not only has she brought live music to help cope with the pandemic shut down, but she has introduced people to classical music with witty introductions to help enrich the experience."

Irina further mentioned, "There was a contest for the best name of the group, that's how we got the name of the group Melodia Mariposa. Ashlee Chen, the winner of the Pasadena Rotary Stover Music Competition, performed at our concert, as well as Jason Lewis, a 21-year-old super talented guitarist and neuroscientist."

Irina was also honored with a meaningful award from Congresswoman Judy Chu. "I would like to thank Congressmember Judy Chu for her inspired insight to create this Volunteer of the Year Award as part of the Congressional Leadership Awards. And big gratitude to all the musicians throughout our community who give their time and talents to make the world a better place." Her efforts were also recognized nationally in a "New York Times" article locally by "Pasadena Now."

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Life goes on outside of the concerts, of course. Irina says she loves taking vacations with her family who live in Odessa most of the year. Her son Sebastian is married to Zvart and they have



two girls, Ava, 7, and Lia Rose, 3. "Before COVID we went to Portugal to explore, walk, and introduce the little girls to different languages (they are already bilingual). Her son Sebastian is trilingual (English, Spanish, Russian) after studying at UC Davis and abroad in Argentina.

They love to compare food, architecture, and culture. To break up that

high-level education, they hit Disneyland and aquariums, too. A creative family, Ava not only has nine medals in ballroom dance already, and has medals in fencing, she created a new technique of painting this year. She pours the paint on a canvas and then distresses it with chain. And signs it, of course! Lia, she says, has

perfect pitch and loves singing. And they love going to Color Me Mine. Irina enjoys making jewelry and sushi and is interested in neurographic art therapy.

Son Sebastian loves the martial arts, earning gold and bronze awards in city, state, and the Junior Olympics when he was younger. She says he also got a Presidential Award for his many hours of volunteer work. Daughter-in-law Zvart has a law degree and is now a stay-at-home-mom. She is also a great stylist and make-up artist. When together, they have a creative, musical life in Altadena.

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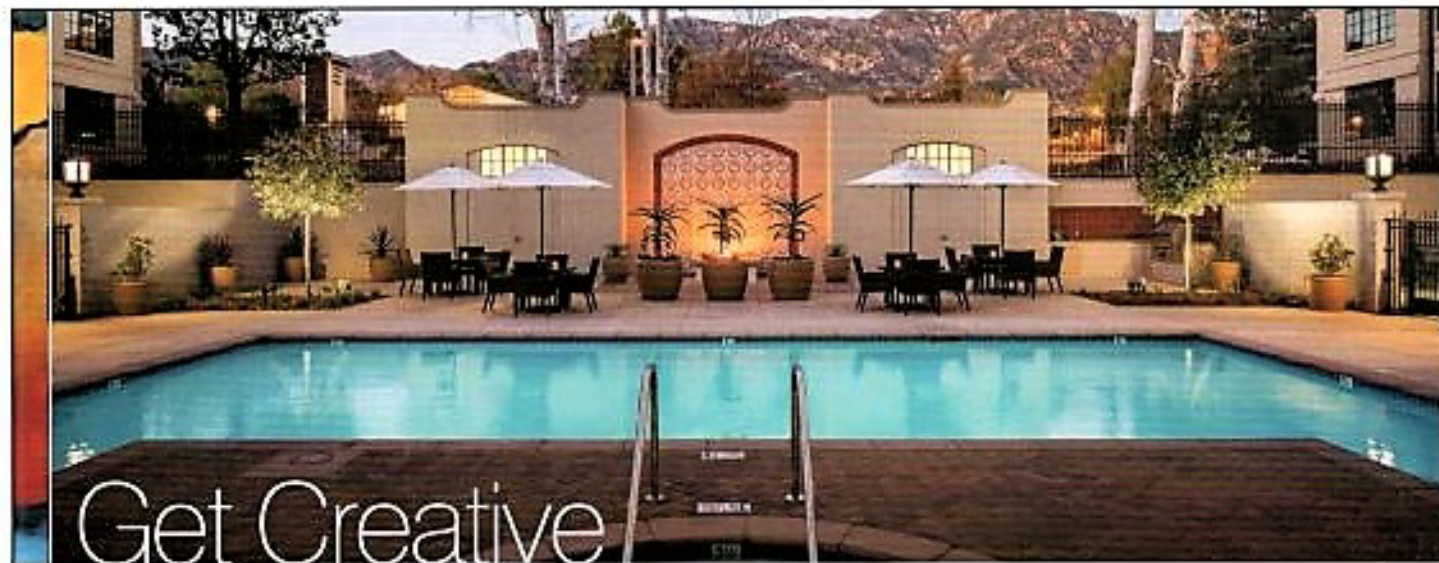
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