

Belarusian guitarist Elina Chekan and Cuban guitarist Rene Izquierdo have been playing as a duo since 2012. The couple first met at Yale University when they were both pursuing post-graduate degrees, studying with acclaimed professor Benjamin Verdery. Duo Exaudi was created out of the desire of both guitarists to join forces in their creative endeavors, and work towards increasing and exploring the guitar repertoire in this new medium.

As a duo they have performed in major concert venues in the United States, Russia and Europe to great critical acclaim. Both award winning artists, they are together a tour de force. Duo Exaudi's commitment to contemporary music and to the expansion of the guitar repertoire has led them to collaborations with composers such as Jorge Morel, Carlos Rafael Rivera, Colette Mourey, and Carl Schimmel.

Praised for their phrasing and musical sensitivity, Duo Exaudi's playing is technically superb, well balanced and exceptionally musical. Their debut CD will be released in the Spring of 2014. They are both currently faculty at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Elina Chekan:

Elina (Ella) Chekan is currently professor of classical guitar at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee where she also directs the Suzuki and Pre-College Guitar Programs.

A native of Minsk, Belarus, Ella graduated from the Belarus Academy of Music in 1999 with a degree in Classical Guitar Performance, Orchestral Conducting, and Guitar Pedagogy. In the year 2002, she completed her Master of Music degree in Classical Guitar Performance from Yale University.

Combining active performance and teaching careers, Ella has appeared as a soloist and chamber musician throughout the United States, Europe and the Caribbean with critical acclaim. In her teaching, Mrs. Chekan applies her extensive knowledge of guitar pedagogy and repertoire, and has experienced first hand different guitar schools of thought. Ella is a certified Suzuki instructor registered with the Suzuki Association of the Americas. All this experience allows her to find unique approaches and repertoire for each of her students, giving them a solid foundation in technique and musicianship at an early stage.

In her quest for present-day repertoire, Ella has commissioned works from composers such as Jorge Morel, who dedicated to Ms. Chekan his composition "Campanas" published by Mel Bay in "The Magnificent Guitar of Jorge Morel."

Ella Chekan performs on a Richard Brune guitar.

Rene Izquierdo:

Rene Izquierdo is currently a professor of classical guitar at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee. As a concert artist, Rene has performed throughout North America, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Asia and Europe as solo recitalist, chamber musician and soloist with orchestra. He has received wide critical acclaim for his performances, and is recognized as one of America's classical guitar virtuosos.

Rene has shared the stage with prestigious guitarists Eliot Fisk, Benjamin Verdery and Jorge Morel; renowned flutist Ransom Wilson, soprano Lucy Shelton, Carlo Aonzo, The Quintet of the Americas and David Jolley; and recorded with Paquito d'Rivera among others. Composers such as Jorge Morel and Carlos R. Rivera have dedicated works to him.

A native of Cuba, Rene graduated from the *Guillermo Tomas, Amadeo Roldan Conservatory and Superior Institute of Art in Havana*. In the United States, he earned Master of Music and Artist Diploma degrees from the *Yale University School of Music*.

As one of the world's leading classical guitarists Mr. Izquierdo is a recipient of numerous awards. He is a winner of the *JoAnn Falletta International Guitar Competition* in 2004, *Extremadura International Guitar Competition*, *Schadt String Competition* and *Stotsenberg International Guitar Competition*, among others.

"... his natural and instinctive interpretations are second to none: his virtuoso technique allows him absolute command of the instrument giving him the independence of subtle phrasing, dazzling speed, beautiful tonal control... everything."

- Classical Guitar Magazine May, 2010

"... dazzling performance... a world-class player . "

- Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, April 12, 2009

" Izquierdo is a very self-assured performer who demonstrated amazing technical and expressive command of the music he plays..."

-Classical Guitar Magazine, Oct. 07.

"... unforgettable versatility, sensitivity and sublime musicianship."

- Classical Guitar Magazine, July, 07.

"...the command and character of his playing lived up to the impressive credentials. His sound carried the guitar-friendly Recital Hall with power to spare. His secure technique eliminated the usual clicks, muffles and buzzes. Speed was no problem for him. ...Izquierdo is a painterly guitarist. He changes angle of attack in the right hand and moves it from bridge to fingerboard to produce a wide spectrum of sonic color. He applies it thoughtfully, to cast particular light on particular melodies..."

-Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Nov 20, 2004.

"...Izquierdo is already a seasoned performer of great accomplishment. His tone is clear, warm and robust, his musicianship impeccable, and his desire and capability equally great..."

-*Eliot Fisk, 2003.*

"I have rarely seen a musical talent equal to Rene Izquierdo. He is a virtuoso guitarist and a profound musical thinker"

-*Benjamin Verdery, 2001.*

"Rene is without any question one of the finest young guitarists in the country"

-*Ransom Wilson, 1999.*

"Rene Izquierdo is one of the most promising young guitarists to come from Cuba, not only for his purist approach to technique, but for his artistic gift as an interpreter, giving him a voice of his own at such a young age"

-*Jesus Ortega, 1994.*