

Nina Beilina, Soviet Violinist and Festival Founder, Dies at 81

By Neil Genzlinger

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Nina Beilina, who emigrated from the Soviet Union in midlife when she was one of that country's premier violinists and built a whole new following in the United States, playing top halls and founding her own ensemble, died on Nov. 25 in Manhattan. She was 81.

Her family said the cause was complications of a stroke, compounded by congestive heart failure.

Ms. Beilina had won prestigious competitions when she lived in the Soviet Union, but she was largely unknown to American audiences when she arrived in New York in 1977; under the authoritarian Soviet system, she had performed primarily in the Soviet bloc and South America. Her formal debut, in January 1978 at the 92nd Street Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Association (now known as the 92nd Street Y), brought her quick acclaim.

"Miss Beilina did not make a false move anywhere," Harold Schonberg wrote in his review in The New York Times. "She is an important instrumentalist, and a first-class musician to boot. Whatever she touched came out with incredible polish, assurance and, when needed, brilliance."

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