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# FORT BEND focus™

APRIL 2008



## *From Russia with love*

Fort Bend Symphony  
Orchestra Violinist  
Tofik Khanmamedov

### **What's Inside**

- *Seen on the Scene*
- *The Grand Wine & Food Affair*
- *Impact a Hero*

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# COVER STORY

## departments

- 20 Community Calendar
- 22 Focus on Community
- 32 Focus on Business
- 34 Focus on Finance
- 38 Focus on Health
- 58 Seen on the Scene
- 68 Fort Bend Headliners
- 72 Focus Scrapbook
- 82 Focus on People
- 84 Focus Cares
- 86 Focus Photo Winner
- 94 High School Hot Shot
- 102 Fort Bend New Neighbors
- 104 Focus Reader's Photo Album
- 108 Focus on Flavor
- 112 Living the Sweet Life

### 16 Tofik K. Khanmamedov, Russian native finds his life in Sugar Land fulfilling

A combination of notes and formulas makes this Fort Bend County resident standout. His cultural adeptness and fortitude allow him to embrace any global community.

Tofik K. Khanmamedov,  
an engineer by day  
and a violinist by night.



By Sharon K. Wollingsford

## Strings and Science:

# A Life of Balanced Satisfaction

A

combination of notes and formulas makes this Fort Bend County resident stand out. His cultural adeptness and fortitude allow him to embrace any global community. Somewhat a rarity in Texas, this astute businessman is an engineer by day and a violinist by night.

Today Russian native Tofik K. Khanmamedov finds his life in Sugar Land fulfilling and energizing because of its professional diversity and cultural advantages.

As the owner of his own company and a seven-year member of the Fort Bend Symphony Orchestra, Khanmamedov delights in being referred to as a normal, hard working guy. It appears he is self sufficient, reliable, and trustworthy from his scores of technological developments.

"This is the best country in the world and it is very well managed," says Khanmamedov, who wears black cowboy boots with pride.

His father, Professor K. M. Khanmamedov, was a well-known scientist. His mother was a high school teacher. He was the middle child of an older brother and a younger sister. "We made toys ourselves as children."

As a lad growing up in Russia he recalls beginning to play the violin when he was six years old. "My parents moved soon after and I had several other teachers in the school," he explains. "One day, when I was fourteen, I decided to arrange a meeting with a very famous professor named S. L. Bretanitsky in Baku. I asked him to listen to me play and give me his opinion of my potential."

After listening to his performance in his apartment he told me, "I am retired now but I have five students and you will be my sixth." The elderly professor gave him classes twice a week for nearly 18 months without charge.

Khanmamedov, who continued his studies and passed the tests in the only musical college in Baku, also self taught himself to play the piano.

"My violin professor had graduated from St. Petersburg and Leipzig conservatories and I saw with my own eyes the St. Petersburg conservatory anniversary book where his name was mentioned among the students of a famous professor named Leopold Auer, whose list of students included Y. Heifetz, E. Zimbalist and many other famous violinists." By the end of the following year the professor died and

Khanmamedov quit music.

His studies continued, only he chose a technical university. "I switched my life to science and engineering. I only played violin for my enjoyment, but I practiced to keep myself in shape."

To become an engineer he graduated from Azerbaijan Institute of Oil and Chemistry in Baku and continued his postgraduate education in Moscow. "I did research in the field of polymer chemistry in the Institute of Petrochemical Synthesis named after A. V. Topchiev of the Academy of Sciences of USSR, Moscow and successfully completed the program in 1971 under the supervision of another distinguished scientist, Lenin Prize laureate Professor B. A. Krentsel," he says. He worked in the Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan from 1971-1982 before he was sent to Manchester University (U. K.) as a postdoctoral research fellow for nearly a year.

In 1983, Khanmamedov received an offer from Gazprom, Russia, for managing "Sulfur Technology Development" at the research laboratory in All-Union Research and Design Institute in Baku. "In a very short time I developed sev-

*continued on page 18*





*“I switched my life to science and engineering. I only played violin for my enjoyment, but I practiced to keep myself in shape.”*

– Tofik K. Khanmamedov

continued from page 16

eral new technologies, received USSR patents and commercialized a new catalyst and technologies for incineration of toxic gases of gas plants in Orenburg (Russia), Mubarek (Uzbekistan), and Ryazan (Moscow region).

In 1990, he presented a paper at the Sulphur-90 International Conference in Cancun, Mexico. The following year in Moscow he achieved the highest scientific degree (D.Sc.) in the USSR in chemical engineering, and became the first scientist in the USSR with a degree in the field of Claus process which

makes sulfur from acid gases of refinery and gas plants.

His invitation to America came when he received a request from a technology engineering company in Dallas to attend a seminar. "After hearing my presentation they invited me to work for them and I moved to Dallas with my family leaving three generations of family behind."

Their departure date fell on August 19, the day of the Coup of 1991. "As a family when we arrived in Moscow we could not get downtown where we had hotel reservations. I recall the cab driver saying that tanks were surrounding

Moscow so we stayed in a small hotel outside the city." The next day they found themselves seated in the airport but unsure if they could fly to Texas. "Luckily we departed Moscow on-time and our friends met us at the Dallas-Fort Worth airport terminal to help us settle in our new surroundings.

After working for several American corporations Khammamedov became an American citizen in 1998 and decided to establish his own technology engineering company in the Houston area – TTK Technology Company, d.b.a. TTK Company.

"We are in the global technology licensing business and our core business is based on our patented technologies for acid gas removal, sulfur recovery and tail gas treatment," he said. "In alliances with engineering-construction companies of the US and others we offer services that include engineering, equipment fabrication and the supply of commercial units and technology licensing.

"We are active in the market of the former Soviet Union, where I have maintained very good and established networks in the refinery, gas plant and petrochemical industries. Often I present papers at prestigious conferences in Russia."

Khammamedov holds more than a dozen selected patents and has written numerous publications. He has given presentations across the world. He speaks five languages.

"When we arrived in the Houston area I began a search for suitable symphony orchestras and discovered the Fort Bend Symphony Orchestra thanks to the Internet. I have played with the FBSO since 2002 and I try not to skip rehearsals in spite of very tough schedules."

His wife Alla is the daughter of the renowned Russian architect K. I. Senchikhin. She earned a Ph.D. in Chemistry and is an expert in the catalysis field. She is employed at the SABIC Technology Center in Sugar Land.

Their son, Djavad graduated from UT at Dallas, after completing his MBA and became an expert in telecommunications. He is employed as Project Manager for Sony Ericsson. Their daughter-in-law, Lin, has Master degrees in science and computer science. They reside in Plano and are parents to their two grandchildren Max, 6, and Sophie, 4, who play the piano and enjoy music like their grandfather. ☆



Tofik Khammamedov with other symphony orchestra members.



Dr. Tofik Khammamedov, Dr. Alla K. Khammamedova, and John Ricarte (former conductor of Fort Bend Symphony).