

Avi Avital

"Here is a musician who recognises no boundaries except those of good taste, and who has the artistry to persuade listeners to follow him anywhere." Gramophone

The first mandolin soloist to be nominated for a classical Grammy, Avi Avital has been compared to Andres Segovia for his championship of his instrument and to Jascha Heifetz for his incredible virtuosity. Passionate and "explosively charismatic" (New York Times) in live performance, he is the driving force behind the reinvigoration of the mandolin: For more than two decades he has reshaped the history and the future of his instrument, playing it in the most prestigious halls all over the world. In addition to that, Avi Avital has expanded the mandolin repertoire not only with transcriptions of various pieces, but by commissioning over 100 works for the mandolin including concertos for mandolin and orchestra by Jennifer Higdon, Anna Clyne, Avner Dorman and Giovanni Sollima.

Highlights of the 2023/24 season see performances with the Frankfurt Radio Symphony and Krzysztof Urbanski, Vancouver Symphony and Tianyi Lu, Camerata Salzburg and Anja Bihlmaier as well as concerts with the Kammerakademie Potsdam alongside tours with Il Giardino Armonico with Giovanni Antonini, CHAARTS and the Venice Baroque Orchestra. Avi Avital will also be on tour with Hanzhi Wang (accordion) through North America and will play recitals with Anneleen Lenaerts (harp), Omer Klein (Jazz piano) and Brooklyn Rider. He is Artist-in-Residence at the Schwetzingen SWR Festspiele and will come back to DeSingel Antwerp, Wigmore Hall London, Philharmonie Berlin, Rheingau Musik Festival and Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival.

Avi Avital's recent engagements include the Chicago, Seattle and Toronto Symphony Orchestras, Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, Los Angeles Philharmonic, NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester, Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, Academy of St Martin in the Fields, Yomiuri Nippon Symphony, Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich, Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI, Orchestra della Svizzera italiana, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Orchestre National de Lyon, Orchestra del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Israel Philharmonic, and the Norwegian Radio Orchestra working with conductors such as Zubin Mehta, Kent Nagano, Alan Gilbert, Robert Spano, Osmo Vänskä, Yutaka Sado, Nicholas McGegan, Omer Meir Wellber and Ton Koopman.

In 2023, Avi Avital launched his new venture, the "Between Worlds Ensemble" with a three-part residency at the Boulez Saal in Berlin and concerts in Bucharest, Warsaw, Hamburg, Ludwigshafen and Antwerp. The ensemble was formed to explore different genres, cultures and musical worlds focusing on different geographical regions and in its first year featured traditional, classical and folk music from the Iberian Peninsula, the Black Sea and South Italy.

Avi Avital's versatility has led to features as "Portrait Artist" at the Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival, BOZAR in Brussels, the Dortmund Konzerthaus (Zeitinsel) and as Artist-in-Residence at the Bodensee Festival and La Jolla Music Society California. He is a regular presence at major festivals such as Aspen, Salzburg, Hollywood Bowl, Tanglewood, Ravenna, MISA Shanghai, Cheltenham, Verbier, Lucerne, Bad Kissingen, Rheingau, Gstaad and Tsinandali.

An exclusive Deutsche Grammophon artist, Avi Avital's seventh album "Concertos", recorded with Il Giardino Armonico and Giovanni Antonini, features mandolin concertos by Vivaldi, Hummel, Bach, Barbella and Paisiello. His album "The Art of the Mandolin" (2020) has been received with high praise and top reviews in The Times, Independent, Gramophone, BBC Music Magazine as well as the international press. Previous recordings "Bach" (2019), "Avital meets Avital" (2017), "Vivaldi" (2015), an album of Avital's own transcriptions of Bach concertos (2012) and "Between Worlds" (2014) also received numerous awards.

Born in Be'er Sheva in southern Israel, Avital began learning the mandolin at the age of eight and soon joined the flourishing mandolin youth orchestra founded and directed by his charismatic teacher, Russian-born violinist Simcha Nathanson. He studied at the Jerusalem Music Academy and the Conservatorio Cesare Pollini in Padua with Ugo Orlandi. He plays on a mandolin made by Israeli luthier Arik Kerman.

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