

“The words “superstar” and “mandolinist” still look odd next to each other. Yet in the classical world they are starting to be joined with some frequency [...] Avi Avital who on Wednesday gave a performance of 18th-century Italian concertos at Zankel Hall with the Venice Baroque Orchestra [...] was nothing short of electric.”

The New York Times
Corinna da Fonseca-Wollheim • March 12th, 2015

AVI AVITAL

MANDOLIN

Biography

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 Heifitz for his incredible virtuosity. Passionate and “*explosively charismatic*” ([New York Times](#)) in live performance, he is a driving force behind the reinvigoration of the mandolin repertory.

Avital’s wide-ranging repertoire and inventiveness have led to collaborations with musicians including Ksenija Sidorova, Giovanni Sollima, Mahan Esfahani, Kristian Bezuidenhout, Alice Sara Ott, Andreas Scholl, Dover Quartet, New Danish Quartet, Brooklyn Rider, Omer Klein (jazz piano), Omer Avital (oud/bassist), actress Martina Gedeck and Georgian puppet theatre, Budrugana Gagra. He has been showcased as a “Portrait Artist” with residencies at the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, BOZAR in Brussels and the Dortmund Konzerthaus (Zeitinsel) and is a regular presence at major festivals such as Aspen, Salzburg, Tanglewood, Spoleto, Ravenna, MISA Shanghai, Cheltenham, Verbier and Tsinandali.

Avital has commissioned over 100 new works for the mandolin adding new concertos to the repertoire by Anna Clyne, Avner Dorman and Giovanni Sollima and chamber pieces by David Bruce and Elena Kats-Chernin amongst others. Later this season he will give the world premiere of Jennifer Higdon’s Mandolin Concerto with the Munich Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Krzysztof Urbanski.

An exclusive Deutsche Grammophon artist, his sixth album for the label “*The Art of the Mandolin*” is released this season and follows recordings of solo Bach (2019), *Avital meets Avital* (2017) with oud/bassist Omer Avital, *Vivaldi* (2015), an album of Avital’s own transcriptions of Bach concertos and *Between Worlds* (2014), a cross-generic chamber collection exploring the nexus between classical and traditional music. He has also recorded for Naxos and SONY Classical.

IMPRESARIAT SIMMENAUER

Avital is highly in demand also as a concerto soloist and has performed with orchestras all over the world working with conductors such as Zubin Mehta, Kent Nagano, Osmo Vänskä, Yutaka Sado, Jonathan Cohen, Nicholas McGegan, Omer Meir Wellber, Ton Koopman and Giovanni Antonini. Engagements include the Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Deutsche Symphonie Orchester Berlin, Orchestre National de Lyon, Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Israel Philharmonic, Yomiuri Nippon Symphony, Residentie Orkest and the Norwegian Radio Orchestra. He tours 2-3 times each season in the USA working with orchestras including the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Seattle Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, Les Violons du Roy, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and The Knights.

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. Winner of Israel's prestigious **Aviv Competition** in 2007, Avital is the first mandolinist in the history of the competition to be so honoured. He plays on a mandolin made by Israeli luthier Arik Kerman.

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