

PEACE CHAMBER CONCERT SERIES

AVITAL MEETS AVITAL

THURSDAY, APRIL 11, 2019 • 7 PM
GUNTER THEATRE

Program will be announced from the stage

Avi Avital - Mandolin

The first mandolin soloist to be nominated for a classical Grammy® Award, 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” (*The New York Times*) in live performance, he is a driving force behind the reinvigoration of the mandolin repertory. More than 100 contemporary compositions have been written for him, 15 of them concertos including by Anna Clyne, Avner Dorman, and Giovanni Sollima, which will be premiered in 2019/20. Enhanced by his infectious spirit of adventure and the warm rapport he fosters with his audience, Avital’s championship of his instrument is taking the mandolin center stage.

An exclusive Deutsche Grammophon artist, he has made four recordings for the label. Recently released *Avital meets Avital* (2017) with oud/bassist, Omer Avital, explores their shared cultural heritage and brings their differing classical and jazz musical backgrounds into dialogue. Earlier releases featured original concerti and transcriptions by *Vivaldi* (2015), his own Bach concerto transcriptions (2012), and *Between Worlds* (2014), a cross-generic chamber collection exploring the nexus between classical and traditional music.

In the 2018/19 season, Avital returned to Carnegie Hall to make his debut on the main stage with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. Highlights of that season in the US also include play-directing the Seattle Symphony, and performances with the Detroit Symphony, San Diego Symphony, and Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra. He also returned to Canada to perform with Les Violons du Roy, ahead of a North American tour in the following season. In the Spring of 2019, following on from his most recent Deutsche Grammophon recording, Avital is touring North America with bassist Omer Avital. Recent appearances in the US also include performances with the St. Louis Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Chicago Symphony.

Avital’s inspired music-making has electrified audiences in performances around the world. He has performed with orchestras such as the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Deutsche Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Tonhalle Zurich, Israel Philharmonic, Dresden Piharmonic, and Tasmania Symphony Orchestra, under conductors such as Zubin Mehta, Kent Nagano, Osmo Vänskä, Ton Koopman, and Giovanni Antonini. Performances have taken him to Beijing’s National Centre for the Performing Arts, London’s Wigmore and Royal Albert Halls, Berlin Philharmonie,

Zurich's Tonhalle, Barcelona's Palau de la Música Catalana, Paris Philharmonie, Vienna Konzerthaus, New York's Carnegie Hall, and Palais de Versailles with a live telecast on TV Arte.

He is a favorite on the international festival circuit, having appeared at the Aspen, Salzburg, Tanglewood, Spoleto, Ravenna, Cheltenham, and Verbier Festivals, amongst others, and he was Portrait Artist at the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival in 2017, which involved over 20 performances of 10 different programmes. Artistic partners in a variety of genres with whom he collaborates include Andreas Scholl, Juan Diego Flórez, Dawn Upshaw, Giora Feidman, Ray Chen, David Greilsammer, Richard Galliano, Ksenija Sidorova, percussionist Itamar Doari, and the Dover and Danish String Quartets. He was featured artist in a Zeitsinsel at the Dortmund Konzerthaus, where he curated a weekend of programs featuring classical, jazz, and improvisations and a new collaboration with the Venice Baroque Orchestra and Georgian puppet theater, Budrugana Gagra.

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 later graduated from the Jerusalem Music Academy and the Conservatorio Cesare Pollini in Padua, Italy, where he studied original mandolin repertoire with Ugo Orlandi. The 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.

Omer Avital – Bass

Bassist and composer Omer Avital is one of today's most striking musicians. Praised by critics as "extraordinary" (*The New York Times*), "roaringly inventive" (*JAZZIZ*), "a pioneer in combining jazz with myriad world music elements" (*Los Angeles Times*) and "one of the most exciting musicians to come onto the jazz scene in the last 20 years" (*DownBeat*), Avital is a visionary composer and virtuoso musician whose genre-defying ensembles are pushing the boundaries of jazz expression and providing audiences with swing and spiritual sustenance in equal measure.

Among the many talented Israeli musicians who have appeared on the world jazz scene in recent years, Avital stands out from the rest. He is not part of this wave but rather one of those who initiated it – Omer Avital is a pioneer. The musician, who has lived in New York since 1992, is partly responsible for putting his native country on the jazz map. Critics from *DownBeat* and *The New York Times* have high praise for the classically-trained virtuoso bass player; he has even been called the Israeli Charles Mingus.

Avital is a visionary who combines music from his cultural background with modern Western jazz. This makes for an atmospheric sound with contagious Middle-Eastern grooves, subtle jazz melodies and orchestral arrangements of Sephardic compositions.

With his new album, *Abutbul Music* (recorded in Paris and released on the Jazz Village records label), Avital delivers once again a strong statement with a powerful sound, joyful rhythms, and oriental melodies that draw on gospel and soul. Avital is continually evolving contemporary jazz and has rightly been called one of the most unique musicians of his generation.

Yonathan Avishai - Piano

Based in France, pianist Yonathan Avishai is without doubt one of the major figures of the emerging Israeli jazz scene. Whether through a concert, in the theater, or in a workshop, this unique musician shares his passion for sound, music, and its history.

Avishai was born and grew up in Israel. He began studying the piano at a young age and discovered jazz in his early teens. At the young age of 14, he formed his own groups and performed at clubs and festivals in his country. He often accompanied touring American musicians in Israel (Walter Blanding Jr., Marcus Printup, Allan Harris) and was part of Arnie Lawrence's ensemble.

He was a member of "The Left Bank," a cooperative association of musicians formed to promote original music in Tel Aviv. This experience led to an involvement with the social and local aspects of cultural development. Avishai took part in organizing musical events in various facilities in the city. As a result of these activities, in 2001, he arrived at a socio-cultural center in Alsace, France, as part of a European exchange program.

In 2002, he moved to Dordogne, France, and got involved in the local cultural scene. He studied music therapy in Bordeaux and then led workshops in facilities for special education, primary schools, and music schools, where he developed a true passion for teaching and pedagogy.

That same year he formed the Third World Love quartet with Omer Avital, Avishai Cohen, and Daniel Freedman. The group recorded five albums and performed around the world. In 2006, Avishai recorded the album *Soledad* (Fresh Sound Records) with percussionist Bachir Mouhali.

In 2008, in collaboration with director Sharon Mohar, Avishai explored the field of music and theater. As a result, the "Compagnie L'air du jeu" (The Playground Company) came into existence and, in 2010, produced a show for children titled *Il était une fois un gribouille*. In 2010, Avishai and drummer Bertrand Noël formed a duo and recorded an album called *Lost Boys* (Cristal Records).

In 2012, Avishai moved to Yonne, France. He created a new project called *Modern Times* with bassist Yoni Zelnik and drummer Donald Kontomanou.

Inspired by artists such as John Lewis, Art Ensemble of Chicago, and Mark Rothko – between tradition and modernity – Avishai strives to deepen the dimensions of his music. Packing each note with a dramatic charge, he creates a poetic world rich in emotion and color. His compositions are restrained, subtle, and feature great refinement.

Itamar Doari - Percussion

Itamar Doari was born in Israel in 1985. He began his musical training when he was only six years old, playing traditional percussion instruments such as frame drums, darbuka, riq and more. During those years, he had the honor to learn from some of the greatest music teachers in hand drums and percussion from Israel and abroad - including Zohar Fresco, Glen Vallez, Sallem Darwish, and Ahmed Taher.

Doari graduated from Klor Music School with honor in 2003. When he was just 17 years old he was already playing and touring around the world with some of the more successful musicians in Israel. Playing some of the most well-known stages and festivals

in Israel and around the world, Doari has become a strong force in the percussion scene worldwide, reaching large audiences with his unique way and sound. He was a winner of the America-Israel Foundation scholarship for 2009/2010. He toured for three years with Avishai Cohen, who he recorded three albums with. Their latest, *Seven Seas*, which Doari also co-produced, made it to the top of playlists in France, Germany, Sweden, and Spain. He also toured with Israeli legend Berry Sakharof.

Doari is a member of the band Yemen Blues, a collaborative project with musicians from New York and Israel that performs worldwide.

He has also taken part in the Israeli International *Idan Raichel Project* albums. Other artists Doari has performed or recorded with are Yasmin Levy, Shem Tov Levi, Fools of Prophecy, Sheva, Ahuva Ozeri, Omar Faruk Tkhbilak, Samir Makhull, Amal Murkus, Avshalom Farjun, and Shai Ben Tzur.

Program content provided by production company

AT A GLANCE

UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE PEACE CENTER

COME FROM AWAY

APRIL 16-21

STRAIGHT NO CHASER:

One Shot Tour

APRIL 30

*An Evening of Original Music with
Edwin McCain, Maia Sharp, and*

DAVID WILCOX

MAY 3

THE ILLUSIONISTS:

LIVE FROM BROADWAY

MAY 4 & 5 • *Three Shows*

DANCE THEATRE OF HARLEM

MAY 11

PEABO BRYSON:

Stand for Love Tour

MAY 16

JEANNE ROBERTSON

MAY 17

An Evening With

DAWES: Passwords Tour

MAY 18

HELLO, DOLLY!

MAY 28 – JUNE 2

LINEAGE AND PLACE

Peace Voices Poetic Conversation

MAY 30 • FREE

GAY CHORUS DEEP SOUTH

Film Screening

JUNE 9

DEAR EVAN HANSEN

JULY 2-7

An Evening With

CHRIS BOTTI

JULY 20

TERRY FATOR

AUGUST 2