

Jeremy Denk Pianist

One of America's most thought-provoking, multi-faceted, and compelling artists, Jeremy Denk is the recipient of a 2013 MacArthur Fellowship. He has appeared as soloist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the symphony orchestras of Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, and London. He regularly gives recitals in New York, Washington, Boston, Philadelphia, and throughout the United States. Last season he returned to Carnegie Hall as part of a 13-city recital tour, besides performing at London's Wigmore Hall. He also toured with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, and played Bach's set of six keyboard concertos in a single evening with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. He will reprise Bach's concertos on tour with the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields next season.

To coincide with the release of his second Nonesuch Records album, *Bach: Goldberg Variations*, Denk launches the 2013-14 season with performances of the "Goldbergs" in Boston, Chicago, and Washington. Upcoming highlights also include his return to Carnegie Hall to play Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 25 on tour with the San Francisco Symphony and Michael Tilson Thomas. He reprises the concerto with the symphony orchestras of Cincinnati and Baltimore, as well as with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, which he will lead from the keyboard. As Music Director of the 2014 Ojai Music Festival, Denk looks forward to performing and curating, and has composed the libretto to a comic opera, *The Classical Style*, by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Steven Stucky. Inspired by Charles Rosen's eponymous seminal text, the opera – a co-commission of the Ojai Music Festival, Carnegie Hall, Cal Performances, and the Aspen Music Festival – features the characters of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven.

Denk is known for his original and insightful writing on music, which Alex Ross praises for its "arresting sensitivity and wit." The pianist's writing has appeared in the *New Yorker*, the *New Republic*, and on the front page of the *New York Times Book Review*. One of his *New Yorker* contributions, "Every Good Boy Does Fine," forms the basis of a memoir he is writing for future publication by Random House. Recounting his experiences of touring, performing, and practicing, his blog, [Think Denk](#), was recently selected for inclusion in the Library of Congress web archives.

In 2012, Denk made his Nonesuch debut with a pairing of masterpieces old and new: Beethoven's final Piano Sonata, Op. 111, and György Ligeti's *Études*. The album was named one of the best of 2012 by the *New Yorker*, NPR, and the *Washington Post*, and Denk's account of the Beethoven sonata was selected by BBC Radio 3's *Building a Library* as the best available

version recorded on modern piano. Denk has a long-standing attachment to the music of American visionary Charles Ives, and his recording of Ives's two piano sonatas featured in many "best of the year" lists. Last season, the pianist was invited by Michael Tilson Thomas to appear as soloist in the San Francisco Symphony's "American Mavericks" festival, and he recorded Henry Cowell's Piano Concerto with the orchestra. Having cultivated relationships with many living composers, he currently has several commissioning projects in progress.

Denk has toured frequently with violinist Joshua Bell, and their recently-released Sony Classical album, *French Impressions*, won the 2012 Echo Klassik award. He also collaborates regularly with cellist Steven Isserlis, and has appeared at numerous festivals, including the Italian and American Spoleto Festivals, and the Santa Fe Chamber Music, Verbier, Ravinia, Tanglewood, Aspen, and Mostly Mozart Festivals.

Jeremy Denk earned degrees from Oberlin College, Indiana University, and the Juilliard School. He lives in New York City, and his web site and blog are at jeremydenk.net.

(597 words)

© 21C Media Group, October 2013



JEREMY DENK

Pianist *at a glance*

One of America's most thought-provoking, multi-faceted, and compelling artists, pianist Jeremy Denk is the recipient of a 2013 MacArthur Fellowship. He has appeared as soloist with many major orchestras, including the Boston, Chicago, San Francisco and London Symphony

Orchestras, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and the Philadelphia Orchestra. He frequently gives recitals in New York, Washington, Boston, Philadelphia, and around the U.S. Denk is also known for his witty and personal writing; his blog, *Think Denk*, is widely read and enjoyed both within and outside the industry, and he has written pieces for the *New Yorker*, the *New York Times Review of Books*, *Newsweek*, the *New Republic*, and the website of NPR Music. One of his *New Yorker* contributions, "Every Good Boy Does Fine," will be the basis of a book he is writing for publication by Random House in a couple of years' time. In 2014 he will be Music Director of the Ojai Music Festival, where as well as performing and curating he is composing the libretto for a comic opera. His debut recording for Nonesuch Records presented music by Ligeti and Beethoven and was included on many "Best of 2012" lists, including those of the *New Yorker*, *Washington Post* and NPR Music; his second recording for the label, released in September 2013, is of Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, a work with which Denk has had a long and close relationship throughout his career.

Biographical info:

- Born: May 16, 1970 in Durham, North Carolina
- Studies: Oberlin (double degree in Chemistry & Piano Performance), Indiana Univ. and Juilliard
- Lives in New York, NY

Some highlights of 2013-14 season:

- Aug 2013: Australian debut, playing Brahms's Piano Quintet on nine-date national tour with four principal members of Australian Chamber Orchestra
- Sept 2013: Nonesuch Records releases Bach's *Goldberg Variations* (Sept 30), plus performances in Boston, Chicago, & Washington DC. A companion DVD offers video "liner notes" in which he explains/demonstrates features of the work from the keyboard (see excerpt [here](#))
- Nov 2013: joins San Francisco Symphony and Michael Tilson Thomas for Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 25, in orchestra's home at Davies Hall and at Carnegie Hall
- June 2014: serves as music director of 68th season of Ojai Music Festival. One highlight: world premiere of *The Classical Style*, a new opera co-commissioned by Ojai, Cal Performances at Berkeley, Carnegie Hall and Aspen Music Festival, with music by Steven Stucky and libretto by Denk himself (Denk describes it as "a love letter to Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven ... A satire of classical pomp").

Links to some of his writings:

- April 8, 2013 issue of *New Yorker*, a personal history: [Every Good Boy Does Fine: A life in piano lessons](#)
- Review of Paul Elie's *Reinventing Bach* in December 6 issue of [The New Republic](#)

- Review of Krause's *The Great Animal Orchestra* in [New York Times Book Review](#), April 2012
- Account of making a recording in [The New Yorker](#): *Flight of the Concord*

Media recognition:

- Profile in April, 2013 Issue of [Vanity Fair](#)
- Profiled by WNET's [NYC Arts](#), May 2012
- Interviewed on NPR's [Fresh Air](#), May 2012
- Feature by Denk about recording Ives in [New Yorker](#), Feb 2012
- Major profiles in [Wall Street Journal](#) and [New York Times](#)

Recording activities:

- Sept 30, 2013: Bach's *Goldberg Variations* for Nonesuch Records
- May 2012: debut recording for Nonesuch Records, *Ligeti/Beethoven*
- Jan 2012: collaborative recording with Joshua Bell, *French Impressions*, on Sony Classical
- Oct 2010: 1st solo recording, *Jeremy Denk Plays Ives*, incl. Piano Sonatas 1 & 2 (Concord)

Think Denk:

His weblog, "Think Denk", is mixture of musical and extra-musical observations, often pertaining to nothing in particular. Alex Ross, *New Yorker's* music critic, wrote of it: "Besides being a brilliant musician, Denk is simply one of the most interesting writers I know."

Interesting facts:

- Made NY recital debut at Alice Tully Hall in 1997 as winner of Juilliard Piano Debut Award
- Met violinist Joshua Bell in 2004 at Spoleto Festival; their musical partnership, beginning with a 2005 tour, continues to this day
- Made solo recital debut at Carnegie Hall in March 2011 substituting for ailing Maurizio Pollini, and returned to the main stage there in March 2013 for another solo recital.
- Taught at Indiana Univ. School of Music, 1996 to 2002; currently on faculty of Bard College
- Received a double degree in Chemistry and Piano Performance at Oberlin College
- Deep commitment to music of Charles Ives; has paired Ives's *Concord Sonata* with Beethoven's "Hammerklavier". Denk explains: "People ask me after concerts why I perform Ives—why I'm drawn to him—and the answer proves difficult to communicate at your average cocktail party. It's because the music is brilliant, inventive, tender, edgy, wild, original, witty, haunting."

Awards:

- Named 2013 MacArthur Fellow ("genius grant")
- 1998: won Young Concert Artists International Auditions and Avery Fisher Career Grant

Audio & video:

- MacArthur Fellow video [Video Here](#)
- <http://jeremydenk.net/listen.php>
- In Practice NPR - video/interview (June 2012) [Video Here](#)
- Profile WNYC NYC-ARTS (May 2012) [Video Here](#)

Critical acclaim:

- "Denk, whose witty, self-deprecating blog draws almost as much attention as his playing, is an omnivorous musician, who scales the Everests of the solo literature ... His performance was a tour-de-force of concentration and keyboard command." — *Washington Post*
- [Re. Ives's "Concord" Sonata and Beethoven's "Hammerklavier" Sonata] "The real argument for the linkage between these pieces came with Mr. Denk's thrilling performances. He played these daunting scores ... from memory, bringing a rare combination of command and spontaneity to his dynamic performances." — *New York Times*

- “As [his] career has blossomed in recent years, his public artistic identity — his “brand” as a performer — has been unusually shaped by a kind of secret weapon: his gifts as a writer.” — *Boston Globe*
- “A rendition of Bach’s ‘Goldberg’ Variations ... was entrancing from the first notes of the famous Aria, a magical experience that was one of the best solo performances this year.” — *New York Times*
- “[At] his Zankel Hall recital début ... he will play one of the most demanding recital programs in recent memory: the “Hammerklavier” and Charles Ives’s no less monumental “Concord” Sonata. Prior concerts have suggested that Denk has the chops, the brains, and the heart to pull it off.” — *New Yorker*
- “Denk ... — who also happens to have a background in chemistry and who also happens to be a gifted writer (his blog, Think Denk, is marvelous) with a deep and original musical mind — was another hero of the festival. If he had done nothing more than rescue Ives’ First Piano Sonata from obscurity, which he did in his glorious Saturday morning recital, I would say the weekend would have been worthwhile.” — *Los Angeles Times*

2013-14 engagements:

September 15	Gardner Museum, <i>Goldberg Variations</i>	Boston, MA
September 20 - 22	Milwaukee Symphony orchestra	Milwaukee, WI
September 27	CU Orchestra	Boulder, CO
October 4 - 6	Concerts in NY:	Schenectady, Sleepy Hollow, Bethel, NY
October 12	Washington PAS, <i>Goldberg Variations</i>	Washington, DC
October 13	Chicago Sym. Orchestra, <i>Goldberg Variations</i>	Chicago, IL
November 7 - 10	San Francisco Symphony	San Francisco, CA
November 14	San Francisco Symphony at Carnegie Hall	New York, NY
November 15	San Francisco Symphony	Urbana-Champaign, IL
November 20	Concert	Kennesaw, GA
November 24	Westchester Philharmonic	White Plains, NY
Nov 29, 30, Dec 1	Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra	Saint Paul, MN
December 6, 7	Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra	Cincinnati, OH
January 12	Concert, Calderwood Hall	Boston, MA
January 16	Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Strathmore	North Bethesda, MD
January 17, 18	Baltimore Symphony Orchestra	Baltimore, MD
January 19	Concert, Howland Cultural Center	Beacon, NY
January 22	Florida State University	Tallahassee, FL
January 26	Philadelphia Chamber Music Society	Philadelphia, PA
January 29	Pennsylvania State University	University Park, PA
February 4	Tuesday Musical, EJ Thomas Hall	Akron, OH
February 9	Shenandoah University	Winchester, VA
February 15	Bowling Green University	Bowling Green, OH
February 22, 23	Spokane Symphony Orchestra	Spokane, WA
February 28	Orquesta y Coro Nacionales de España	Madrid, Spain
March 30	13 th Annual Robert E. Turner Piano Recital	Santa Monica, CA
April 4 & 6	Tucson Symphony Orchestra	Tucson, AZ
April 12	Peoples’ Symphony Concerts	New York, NY
April 15	Sewanee: The University of the South	Sewanee, TN
April 18 & 19	Nashville Symphony Orchestra	Nashville, TN
April 26	Tisch Center/92 nd St Y	New York, NY
April 30	Recital	São Paulo, Brazil
May 1-3	São Paulo Symphony	São Paulo, Brazil
May 17, 18	Los Angeles Chamber Orch/ Jeffrey Kahane	Glendale, CA
June 12-15	Music Director 68 th Ojai Music Festival	Ojai, CA
June 16-21	Cal Performances, 4 th Ojai North!	Berkeley, CA

www.jeremydenk.net
www.facebook.com/JeremDenkOfficial
www.twitter.com/jeremydenk