

# HENRY DEHLINGER

C O M P O S E R

## LONG BIO (1137 Words)

Hailed by *Gramophone* as “a master of myriad styles planted largely in tonal soil,” composer **Henry Dehlinger** is helping shape the landscape of contemporary classical music.

His remarkable [oeuvre](#) of choral and symphonic works reveals a modern musical language that is evocative yet familiar. His compositions also make use of eclecticism while being rooted in the American symphonic vernacular.

Noted musicologist James Melo adds, “Dehlinger has been one of the most successful practitioners of polystylism, a distinctly 21st-century musical style that draws from multiple influences, genres, traditions, and techniques.” *Audiophile Audition’s* Steven Ritter calls Dehlinger’s work “stunningly superb” and “formidably essential listening!”

In his major choral works, Dehlinger renders themes from a diverse palette of musical styles to amplify the texts he is setting. These fragments are then woven into meaningful aural experiences that are at once epic and intimate.

“Dehlinger shapes music to illuminate the meaning of the text,” explains *Gramophone’s* Donald Rosenberg, “The songs are diverse in atmosphere and harmonic language... and the writing is rich, often rapturous.”

Dehlinger’s stylish jazz arrangements, with their melodic lines and edgy vocal and piano writing throughout, are equally celebrated. *Fanfare Magazine* calls them “superbly judged, from the lyricism through to the stride.”

“Just as impressive,” adds *Journal of Singing’s* Gregory Berg, “is how Dehlinger weaves together those fragile pastel shades with the bold brassiness of stride piano. In lesser hands, the result would be musical chaos; Dehlinger makes it work perfectly.”

Born and raised in San Francisco, Dehlinger studied piano and sang in the San Francisco Boys Chorus during his formative years. His mentors were piano virtuoso Thomas LaRatta, choral conductor William "Doc" Ballard, and voice teacher Edith Doe Ballard. All three helped shape him as a performer and an artist. He earned a reputation as a prodigious talent, singing with the San Francisco Opera and performing with major orchestras under conductors such as Riccardo Chailly and Edo de Waart. He graduated from Santa Clara University where he studied piano with Hans Boepple.

Dehlinger’s slate of world premieres this and next season includes six major new works:

In partnership with NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center, National Philharmonic presents the world premiere of Dehlinger’s [Cosmic Cycles](#) (2023) with two performances in May 2023.

Dehlinger's new work will integrate a symphonic suite played live against the backdrop of out-of-this-world images, animations, and groundbreaking visualizations from NASA Goddard.

[\*Requiem\*](#) (2021) is Dehlinger's seven-movement setting of the Requiem Mass with additional texts by James Joyce and John Donne. Scored for mixed chorus, soprano and baritone soloists, and orchestra, it premieres October 30, 2022, at the season opening concert of Choralis at The Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall in Alexandria, Virginia.

[\*Kohelet: A Cantata in Five Movements\*](#) (2019) premiered March 20, 2022, in Washington, DC. Composed for the Washington Master Chorale, Santa Clara Chorale, Santa Clara University Choirs, and the San José Chamber Orchestra, it combines Biblical Hebrew verse with lush, modal melodies, energetic meters, and colorful harmonic textures. It makes its West Coast premiere on May 21, 2022, in Santa Clara, California.

Dehlinger drew his inspiration for *Kohelet*, in part, from Leonard Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*, a work he performed in his youth as a chorister with the San Francisco Boys Chorus. Like *Chichester*, *Kohelet* is an ecumenical blend of Judaic antiphonal singing and Christian choral tradition that is alternately boisterous and reverent.

On March 17, 2022, [\*Return to the Moon\*](#) (2021), a fanfare for brass, timpani and percussion, heralded NASA's historic Artemis missions to the moon. Dehlinger's powerful anthem premiered as it marked the space agency's rollout of its *Space Launch System*, the world's most powerful rocket, during a televised ceremony at the Kennedy Space Center.

[\*The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock\*](#) (2017), a sweeping rhapsody for voice and orchestra, premiered October 16, 2021, at National Philharmonic's 2021-22 season opening concert. Composed for Metropolitan Opera soprano Danielle Talamantes and inspired by the famous poem by T.S. Eliot, *Prufrock* uses the melodic and rhythmic contours of the text's stream of consciousness narrative to dictate mood and melodic character.

On May 23, 2021, NatPhil premiered Dehlinger's [\*Amore\*](#) (2019), a love duet that was broadcast on WETA | PBS television. *Opera News* called it, "a loving and clever duet, and a true gem of a song." Dehlinger composed it for the nuptials of two close friends in Florence, Italy. What better text could he set than an Italian love sonnet from *La vita nuova* by Dante, the revered Florentine poet?

Other notable compositions include *Serenade & Scherzo* (2021), a chamber work for viola quintet; *Fantasia in Groove* (2021), a concert suite of urban impressions of Los Angeles for cello and piano; *Ring Out, Ye Bells* (2021), a setting of African-American poet Paul Laurence Dunbar's reverent Christmas hymn; *I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day* (2021), a new choral setting of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's famous Christmas poem; *Hodie!* (2020), Dehlinger's Christmas concert opener for mixed chorus; *Preludes of T.S. Eliot* (2020), a setting of Eliot's four-part poem that explores themes of isolation in modern urban life and which Dehlinger wrote in response to the coronavirus pandemic; *Memorial Day* (2020), a setting of Joyce

Kilmer's eponymous poem for TTBB chorus, trumpet in C, and snare drum and Dehlinger's tribute to the fallen men and women of the U.S. armed forces; *Cello Sonata in C Minor* (2020); *Three Choral Songs on James Joyce* (2019); *At That Hour When All Things Have Repose* (2019); *Bahnhofstrasse* (2019); *On the Beach at Fontana* (2019); *Simples* (2019); *Alone* (2019); *Flood* (2019); *Strings in the Earth and Air* (2019); *Night Piece* (2019); *Tutto è sciolto* (2019); *A Memory of the Players in a Mirror at Midnight* (2019); *Questa fiamma* (2017); *Requiescat* (2017); *Fragrance* (2016); and *The Mount* (2015).

Dehlinger's latest album, *At That Hour: Art Songs by Henry Dehlinger*, was released in October 2020 by Avie Records. This world premiere recording of his vocal solo works adds to the list of critically acclaimed collaborations with soprano Danielle Talamantes and her bass-baritone husband, Kerry Wilkerson. It is featured on Spotify's *High Notes* playlist, representing "the best new releases in opera and vocal music."

Dehlinger's other recordings include *Evocations of Spain* (2011), a solo recital of piano works by Isaac Albéniz and Enrique Granados; *Canciones españolas* (2014), a recital of Spanish art songs by Enrique Granados, Manuel de Falla and Joaquín Turina and Dehlinger's first musical collaboration with Danielle Talamantes; and *Heaven and Earth: A Duke Ellington Songbook* (2016), also with Talamantes, featuring Dehlinger's arrangements of Ellington jazz standards, which *Audiophile Audition* called, "a knock-your-socks-off performance that leaves you hankering for much, much more."

Dehlinger is a voting member of The Recording Academy and ASCAP. Dehlinger, his wife Lauren, and their Shetland Sheepdogs, Spy and Summer, divide their time between Northern Virginia, just outside Washington, DC, and Northern California.

His official website is: [www.HenryDehlinger.com](http://www.HenryDehlinger.com).

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