

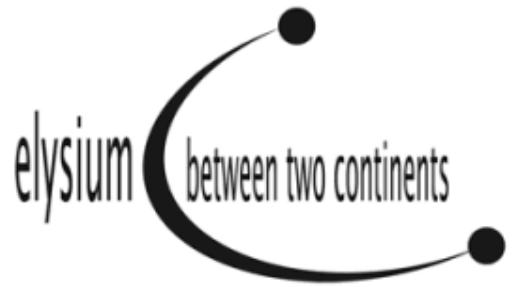
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# Elysium Between Two Continents to Present a Concert of Forgotten Music by Exiled Composer Egon Lustgarten

Elysium Between Two Continents will present a performance at the Austrian Cultural Center on October 7, 2021 at 7:30 PM entitled: *Healing a Fractured World: The Music of Egon Lustgarten*. Lustgarten, a central musical figure in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Vienna, composed dozens of musical works that are largely unknown today. His opera, *Dante im Exil*, was called “the best opera of the 20<sup>th</sup> century” by conductor Joseph Krips, and his compositional brilliance was well-recognized by his contemporaries. However, Lustgarten struggled both financially and professionally after he was forced to emigrate to New York City in 1938, and he never achieved the same artistic status as he had once held in Vienna.

The performance will commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Lustgarten’s death; he was born in 1887 and died at the age of 74 in 1961. Elysium will present several world premieres, in addition to many rarely-heard song selections. To complement the musical performances, literary material from letters, lectures, and other biographical sources will be read by Artistic Director Gregorij von Leitis. The spoken text will interweave with the musical selections to tell Lustgarten’s story as a refugee to the United States, and the struggles he faced rebuilding his life in a new country.

Dan Franklin Smith (“an incredibly sensitive player with a beautiful tone...”) will play piano, while soprano Alexis Rodda (“a lovely voice, full of color and body in every register...”) and baritone Wil Kellerman (“superb... a promising voice”) will sing.

Gregorij von Leitis, the founder and Artistic Director of Elysium Between Two Continents, was the first non-American to win the New York Theatre Club Prize in 1985 and has been hailed as “an ambassador of Jewish culture.”

Gregorij von Leitis and Elysium Executive Director Michael Lahr have been at the forefront of rediscovering Lustgarten’s work, producing the world premiere of *Dante im Exil* in 2005, and “Are There Miracles? There Are Only Miracles?” a concert of Lustgarten’s music in 2016. Elysium Between Two Continents’ mission is to foster artistic exchange, creative dialogue, and mutual friendship between the United States and Europe, while fighting against discrimination, racism, and anti-Semitism by means of art.

Soprano Alexis Rodda, who has been an ensemble member of Elysium since 2012, began researching Lustgarten in 2015 and is currently working on the first biography of the composer, as well as a critical edition score of his fairy tale opera, *The Blue Mountain*. She conducted research in Lustgarten’s estate, held at the Lahr von Leitis Academy and Archive, while on a Fulbright scholarship from 2019 to 2020.

The evening was curated in collaboration between Elysium Executive Director Michael Lahr, Artistic Director Gregorij von Leitis, and Alexis Rodda.

*Healing a Fractured World: The Music of Egon Lustgarten* will be held at the Austrian Cultural Forum at 11 East 52nd Street, New York, New York on October 7, 2021 at 7:30 PM.

As per the New York City Covid-19 Executive Order 225, proof of vaccination, as well as an I.D., will be required upon entry. Proof of vaccination may include a CDC Vaccination Card, an NYC Vaccination Record, NYC Covid Safe App, Excelsior Pass, or an official immunization record from outside NYC or the U.S., showing proof of receipt of at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine authorized for emergency use or licensed for use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration or authorized for emergency use by the World Health Organization.

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Elysium Between Two Continents is a nonprofit arts organization dedicated to fostering artistic and academic dialogue, creative and educational exchange, and mutual friendship between the USA and Europe, especially the German speaking countries. Through arts and educational programs, Elysium fights against discrimination, racism, hate, anti-semitism, and Holocaust denial and distortion. It was founded in New York City in 1983 by Gregorij von Leitis, who serves as Artistic Director alongside Executive and Program Director Michael Lahr.

For further information, photos, and/or to arrange interviews, please contact Alexis Rodda at [alexisrodda@gmail.com](mailto:alexisrodda@gmail.com) or 201-790-3055.