



## Refugee composers rediscovered in a concert presented by Elysium Between Two Continents

*Elysium Between Two Continents commemorates the 100th anniversary of the International Society for Contemporary Music by featuring the forgotten works of composers forced into exile in a concert presented under the auspices of American baritone Thomas Hampson*

**NEW YORK, November 3, 2022** – Elysium Between Two Continents, the NYC-based nonprofit organization fighting anti-Semitism through the means of art and academic dialogue, will present a concert entitled *Innovators in Exile: Celebrating 100 Years of the International Society for New Music*. The concert is a preview performance of a larger upcoming three-day spring musical festival Elysium Between Two Continents will present in April in collaboration with The Leo Baeck Institute New York, the American Society for Jewish Music, the Austrian Cultural Forum NYC, and the Exilarte Center for Banned Music in Vienna, presented under the auspices of American baritone **Thomas Hampson**.

In 1922, a group of musicians organized a festival in Salzburg to showcase modern music by composers from around the world. Seen by some scholars as an attempt to subvert the conservative image of a newly-founded Austria being promoted by the Salzburg Festival, the festival returned in 1923 as the International Society for Contemporary Music, which is still in existence today. However, even by 1923, the festival had already earned the ire of anti-modernists, with one reporter from *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* calling the participants “musical bolsheviks.”

An extant image from the festival features a group of serious-faced modern composers, who did not yet know their fate: the majority of those pictured would be exiled to the United States as the rise of Nazi ideology linked modernism with Jewishness and Bolshevism. Most of these composers, in the midst of or on the precipice of vibrant careers, are now virtually unknown.

Elysium will honor the centennial of this 1922 festival with an evening of music from these exiled composers, including **Rudolf Reti, Paul Pisk, Karl Weigl, Hugo Kauder, Wilhelm Grosz, Egon Lustgarten, Paul Hindemith, and Egon Wellesz**. The concert will largely feature music composed by these composers after their emigration, most of which has never before been heard by modern audiences.

Founded in 1983 by Artistic Director Gregorij von Leitnis, Elysium Between Two Continents has tirelessly revitalized the artistic works of composers unjustly forgotten due to racism and anti-Semitism. **Michael Lahr**, the Program Director of Elysium, and **Alexis Rodda**, Elysium’s Program Coordinator, are the creative team behind the *Innovators in Exile* festival. **Jeannie Im** is the director of the concert program. Lahr will give an introduction to the evening’s events, while Rodda, an award-winning soprano, Im, a soprano noted by *Opera News* for her “gorgeous line and touching intensity,” and baritone **Bryan Murray** (called “powerful and forthright” by *Opera News*) will sing. **Dan Franklin Smith**, an “incredibly sensitive player” according to *The Brooklyn Eagle*, will play piano.

“The hundredth anniversary of the International Society for Contemporary Music reminds us that many of the composers that were celebrated there are completely forgotten to history through no fault of their own,” says Michael Lahr, Executive Director of Elysium. “This festival, and indeed this concert, will give modern audiences the opportunity to hear the music these composers created while they were grappling with the unimaginable difficulties of being refugees in a strange new land.”

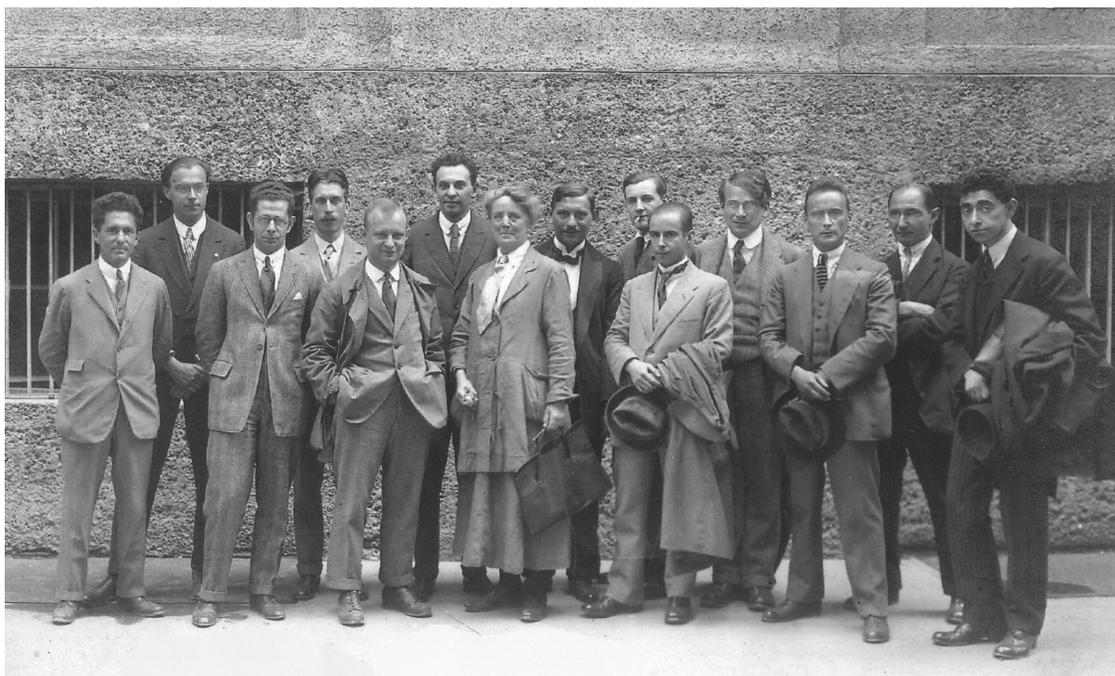
The preview concert for *Innovators in Exile* will be presented at the Austrian Cultural Forum NYC on November 3, 2022 at 7 PM. Admission is free, but reservations are encouraged by emailing [events@acfny.org](mailto:events@acfny.org) or calling 212-319-5300. For more information, please visit <https://acfny.org/>.

### About Elysium Between Two Continents

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 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.

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One of the very few photos documenting the first International Chamber Music Festival in August 1922 in Salzburg. Pictured are (from left to right): Karl Weigl, Karl Alwin, Wilhelm Grosz, Arthur Bliss, Paul Hindemith, Rudolf Reti, Ethel Smyth, Paul Amadeus Pisk, Willem Pijper, Egon Lustgarten, Egon Wellesz, Anton Webern, Karl Horwitz and Hugo Kauder. Elysium received the photo with the estate of the Austrian exile composer Egon Lustgarten.

(Photo: The Lahr von Leitis Academy & Archive)