

Henry Dehlinger

composer & creative thinker

LONG BIO

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Composer, arranger, and creative thinker – **Henry Dehlinger** is an exciting new arrival on the contemporary classical music scene. Hailed by *Gramophone* for his “vibrantly colorful palette” and “exquisite piano-playing,” his vocal, chamber, and orchestral works are helping shape the landscape of 21st century American music.

Throughout Dehlinger’s output, one finds a modern musical language that is evocative yet familiar. It makes use of eclecticism while being rooted in an American vernacular, whether he is writing for small ensembles, symphony orchestras, or solo voice and piano. In his large-scale vocal and choral works, he 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.

Musicologist James Melo considers Dehlinger, “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* calls his accomplishments “stunningly superb” and “formidably essential listening!”

His 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 Metropolitan Opera 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 stylish arrangements of the American Songbook, 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.”

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, an artist, and creative thinker. 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.

The end of the second decade of the millennium marks the culmination of a prolific period for Dehlinger the composer. During the 2019-20 season, sixteen of his compositions had their premieres. For the 2020-21 season and beyond, Dehlinger premieres at least five more, including three large-scale works.

Inspired by the famous poem by T.S. Eliot, Dehlinger completed his first large-scale work, *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* (2017). The sweeping rhapsody for voice and orchestra will be first performed by National Philharmonic at Strathmore. Composed for the voice of Danielle Talamantes, the piece examines the twin crucibles of paralysis and indecisiveness in modern urban life and embraces a musical aesthetic that merges classical and vernacular elements. *Prufrock* also uses the melodic and rhythmic contours of Eliot's stream of consciousness narrative to dictate mood and melodic character.

Kohelet (2019), a cantata in five movements for mixed chorus, soloists and orchestra, is Dehlinger's magnum opus to date. Composed for the Washington Master Chorale, Santa Clara Chorale and Santa Clara University Concert Choir, it combines lush, modal melodies, energetic meters, and colorful harmonic textures with Hebrew text from Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs. Dehlinger drew his inspiration for *Kohelet*, in part, from Leonard Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*, a work he performed as a soloist 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.

The orchestral premiere of Dehlinger's *Amore* (2019) kicks off National Philharmonic's live stream broadcast of *Amore & Mozart* in spring 2021. The full title – *Amore e 'l cor gentil sono una cosa* – translates to “Love and the gentle heart are one and the same.” Dehlinger composed the piece for his friends Jennifer and Eddie's recent nuptials in Florence, Italy. What better text could he set than a beautiful love sonnet in Italian from *La vita nuova* by Dante, the revered Florentine poet? Moreover, it enjoys its premiere with the operatic duo of Talamantes and Wilkerson, who sang it on the album, *At That Hour*, and at the wedding!

Other major compositions by Dehlinger include *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; *Cello Sonata in C Minor* (2020); *Hodie!* (2020), Dehlinger's thrilling Christmas concert opener for mixed chorus; *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 also wrote a choral memorial to the fallen men and women of the U.S. armed forces, *Memorial Day* (2020). Scored for TTBB chorus, trumpet in C, and snare drum, it is a setting of the solemn poem of the same name by Joyce Kilmer – American poet, patriot, and fallen hero who was killed by an enemy sniper’s bullet during the Second Battle of the Marne in World War I.

Dehlinger’s other recordings include *Evocations of Spain* (2011), a solo recital of piano masterworks by Isaac Albéniz and Enrique Granados; *Canciones españolas* (2014), a critically acclaimed recital of Spanish 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 their homes in Northern Virginia, just outside Washington, DC, and Northern California.

His official website is: www.HenryDehlinger.com.

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