

SHUFFLE Concert **BIOGRAPHY**



A modern day ensemble that delivers the unexpected. Inspiring and energetic, New York-based chamber music ensemble SHUFFLE Concert changes the rules of performance as we know it. Conceived by SHUFFLE's artistic director and pianist, Eliran Avni, SHUFFLE was born while Avni was exercising on the elliptical machine at the gym. His MP3 player jumped from a Pretenders song to the first movement of Prokofiev's Fifth Symphony, nearly causing him to lose his balance... and thus, the idea for SHUFFLE was born!

Unique to SHUFFLE's performances is the manner in which the program is selected. The audience is invited to actively participate in the selection of works to be performed by choosing from a menu of over 30 works derived from 15 different styles, with works ranging from solos and duos, to trios, quartets, quintets and sextets. Genres vary from classical, baroque, and romantic, to Jazz, pop and Broadway. The result is a highly engaged audience and a high energy performance.

SHUFFLE's members are exceptionally accomplished chamber musicians; they are graduates of such schools as Juilliard, New England Conservatory, Oberlin, Manhattan School of Music and Bard College and have all individually won numerous prizes and have performed extensively as soloists and collaborative musicians throughout the world.

Since its inception, SHUFFLE has performed in a variety of concert settings, including the Duplex, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, the Rose Studio at Lincoln Center, Merkin Hall and Rhinebeck Chamber Music Society Series in New York; Buck Hill Skytop Music Festival in Pennsylvania; Molloy College in Long Island; Los Angeles's L'Ermitage Concert Series, Lancaster Performing Arts Center and Pepperdine University Center for the Arts in California, and Canada's Chamberfest Ottawa, and presented residencies at East Stroudsburg University and Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania; Mirman School in Los Angeles; The Dalles Middle school, Oregon; and the International School in Herzeliya, Israel, to name a few.

SHUFFLE has made five tours of Israel to date, and will be returning for a sixth tour next season. In December 2012 the ensemble made its Merkin Hall debut, which was broadcast on WWFM and WQXR, and which included the premieres of new works by Avner Dorman and Jonathan Keren. The

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ensemble's debut eponymous CD was released in October 2013, and in 2014, to celebrate its fifth anniversary, SHUFFLE announced its first Composition Competition, awarding prizes to composers Piotr Szewczyk, Kevin Wilt and Oran Eldor for their original compositions for the ensemble.

2015-16 highlights include performances at the Cooperstown Music Festival and at Merkin Hall as part of ChamberMusicNY's series in New York; McCallum Theatre, California State University, Chico, Bishop Community Concert Association, and Hutchins Street Square Performing Arts Theatre in California; Michigan's Berman Center for the Performing Arts; Ohio University's On The Edge Concert Series; Oregon's Florence Event Center, Texas' Cliburn Institute and the College of Idaho. The ensemble was chosen to perform at Weill Recital Hall as one of five ensembles presenting at the prestigious YPCA showcase at Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall and was featured in the 2000 show of "Young Artist Showcase" hosted by Robert Sherman.

This past July SHUFFLE released its long-awaited Interactive Video Project which allows presenters and audiences to choose their own musical adventure in the comfort of their own home. The video includes five segments, each in a different musical style. The viewer is invited to watch them in any particular order of their choice. In addition, the ensemble also released two short trailer videos from live performances in October 2015 at the McCallum Theatre in Palm Desert, CA and Merkin Hall. The first trailer explains the SHUFFLE rules and the second presents audience responses to the SHUFFLE concept and performances. Both can be viewed on the Media page on the SHUFFLE website.

Upcoming engagements include the Brooks Center for the performing Arts, Clemson University in South Carolina; Gordon Center for the performing Arts in Baltimore, Maryland; the Vern Riffe - Shwannee State in Portsmouth Ohio, as well as the ensemble's sixth tour to Israel in April-May of 2017.



Q & A

HOW SHUFFLE CAME TO BE

"It was like time traveling," SHUFFLE's founder, creative director and pianist, Eliran Avni says. "One minute I was listening to music that was reminiscent of an '80s dance club and the next, the Siberian wastelands. So I thought to myself, how incredible it would be to perform a concert like that, where the entire program would be based on these extreme stylistic juxtapositions, and I could then take the audience time traveling with me!" *Eliran Avni, Artistic Director*

"The concept of mixing styles and instrumentation is nothing new. In Beethoven's time, concert programs often combined different genres and instrumentation. That was the norm. People would bring their picnic baskets and hear two movements of a symphony followed by a couple of arias, then maybe a concerto movement, etc. So, in fact, a SHUFFLE Concert is a contemporary version of what Beethoven and his audience would have expected to hear." *Eliran Avni, Artistic Director*

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

In SHUFFLE Concert's original form, a computer program randomly selected the pieces performed, simulating the shuffle mode on an MP3 player. This later transformed into the unique concept of letting the audience decide which pieces would create the program. For perhaps the first time in the modern performance of classical music, the audience decides what happens next on stage.

WHO'S WHO

Each of SHUFFLE's members is an exceptionally accomplished chamber musician; they are graduates of such schools as Juilliard, New England Conservatory, Oberlin, Manhattan School of Music and Bard College. Ariadne Greif, Adrienne Pardee* (soprano); Brendan Speltz, Francisco Fullana* (violin); Sofia Nowik, Linor Katz*, Sarah Rommel*, and Brook Speltz* (cello); Moran Katz, Stasnislav Chernyshev* (clarinet); Eliran Avni (piano); Hassan Anderson and Jessica Pearlman* (oboe) have all individually won numerous prizes and have performed extensively as soloists and collaborative musicians throughout the world (asterisk indicates alternate player).



SHUFFLE Concert **PRESS AND PLAUDITS**

“To be in the room that evening, though, was to discover the tension and the drama of never knowing what’s next. ... As they played, they swayed. ... They moved as if the music were something they were riding atop, not creating.”

—**Anand Giridharadas, The New York Times**

“I’ve enjoyed recordings by the superb artists of SHUFFLE, but hearing—and seeing—them in live performance was an entirely different experience. Their personal warmth and high stage charisma give the music a special uplift, while their individual and collective ability to cross stylistic borders on a moment’s notice was an ongoing delight.”

—**Robert Sherman, Author and Classical Music Radio Host at WQXR**

“I don’t think we have ever had a concert that was more fun or more beautifully played at Clemson...The experience of being able to hear Bach, Grieg, Bernstein, Duke Ellington, ‘When You’re Good to Mama’ from Chicago, Stevie Wonder’s ‘You and I,’ Ravel, Khachaturian, Turina, and Piazzolla all in one evening on one program was phenomenal, and everything was beautifully prepared and played. I think our audience would have been thrilled if they had been played for two more hours. Their talkback to an honors music appreciation class was one of the three best talkback we have had in my 20 years as director. Being young, our CU students certainly responded to them and their insights into the music and how important it is for them to carry the torch for great music in all genres. Otherwise, we won’t have an audience in the very near future. Likewise, their program yesterday morning for children on our Tri-ART program was such a success and many of the children came back last night with their parents.”

— **Lillian Utsey Harder, Director Brooks Center Clemson, SC**

“Their playlist is unique, something few other groups would have considered putting together, but what is more important about this ‘musical democracy’ is that it has invented its own distinctive rules to performance, and that their inspired programming has been a hit.”

—**Susan Miron, ArtsFuse Online Magazine**

“I had the pleasure of hearing SHUFFLE Concert perform recently and I was thoroughly enthralled by their performance. They are all very natural, communicative artists whose energy and joy in performing is highly infectious. It was actually a welcome change to hear a series of shorter works, featuring solo turns by their virtuoso performers, and I kept hoping that my number would be called so that I could determine the next program selection. I recommend them highly for audiences both knowledgeable and new to classical music.”

—**Edna Landau, Arts and Career Development Consultant**

“It was somewhat of a risk to invite SHUFFLE Concert to perform on Merkin’s Tuesday Matinee series, as most of our artists present in the traditional recital format and it was unclear how our audience would respond to SHUFFLE’s unique concept. However, the risk definitely paid off and I could not be happier with the concert’s outcome. It was an excellent performance, presented at the highest level and was extremely well received by our audience. At my request the ensemble performed a first programmed half and a second 'shuffled' half. Both were terrific and the audience was enthralled, as was I, with the

(PRESS continued)

high level of performance and artistry of the ensemble. The concert was recorded and presented on WWFM."

—Igal Kesselman, Director, Lucy Moses School and Merkin Hall's Tuesday Matinee Series

"The SHUFFLE Concert, presented in a distinguished and quite traditional chamber music venue here in New York, was a huge hit. The audience loved the whimsical and unexpected on-the-spot nature of the selection of repertoire. When combined with warm speaking about the music by members of the group and the first-rate performances that followed, this made for an exceptionally wonderful and unusual evening. Bravo!"

—Bärli Nugent, Director of Chamber Music, The Juilliard School

"The music students and faculty of the Sunderman Conservatory at Gettysburg College were so enthusiastic about the residency and concert by SHUFFLE Concert that requests to bring them back to campus began before these talented musician-teachers had left campus. The members of SHUFFLE clearly relished working with students and were models for the type of entrepreneurial creativity we want to foster in aspiring 21st-century musicians. Our recital hall was filled for their innovative concert, which received an enthusiastic response. I heartily recommend them! Plans are already in the works to bring SHUFFLE Concert back to Gettysburg."

—Kay Hoke, Director, Sunderman Conservatory of Music at Gettysburg College

"Without a doubt, this is a brilliant idea. ... This sort of active participation from the audience in shaping the concert leads to higher and deeper levels of alertness and listening as well as more complex enjoyment ... a brilliant idea..."

—Yon Feder, Latest News, Tel Aviv



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“In the quest to bring ‘culture’ to college campuses, Activity Directors have looked for ensembles that will appeal to their students. Many of these groups have lots of flash and little talent. SHUFFLE Concert has plenty of flash AND loads of talent. Their unique music selection process involves everyone in the audience. Hearing everything from classical to Broadway, my students didn’t want the concert to end!”
—**Betsy Buzzeli-Clarke, Chair, Music Department, East Stroudsburg University, PA**

“The SHUFFLE Concert residency exceeded my expectations in every possible way. Six composition students received world-class recordings of their music and direct professional advice on their work; performance students received hours of coaching from ensemble members; and the SHUFFLE Concert itself was an instant hit—the response was universal: ‘When can we have them back?!’”
—**Avner Dorman, Assistant Professor, Composition and Theory, The Sunderman Conservatory of Music**

“The goal of Redmond Community Concert Association (RCCA) is to present high-quality performances by such musicians as SHUFFLE Concert, while leaning toward enjoyable entertainment rather than education. SHUFFLE Concert excelled in meeting this goal. There was great anticipation, and some excited trepidation, that ‘my number may be called.’ As such the audiences were deeply involved in picking their choice, and happy with each composition they heard, ranging from the world of baroque, impressionism, classical, opera, pop, jazz, to Broadway (‘When You’re Good to Mama’ from *Chicago*—the audience loved this change up!) and more. All in all, RCCA closed the day with a grand feeling of having ‘hit a home run’ with our presentation of SHUFFLE Concert.”
—**Jay Jantzen, Booking Director, Redmond Community Concert Association**

“These accomplished musicians bring their professional performance experience combined with great talent to every piece. Our audience made many positive comments about the talent and quality of the performance. The program provides plentiful choices of enjoyable, recognizable and familiar tunes from several different time periods to delight a variety of audiences. The musicians of SHUFFLE Concert were adaptable and easy to work with. The process of working out the details of their performing here—from room and board, the sound technicians and venue—were all easily handled. They connected with our audience through wit and humor. By allowing your audience to choose from a wide variety of time periods and styles of music, each show is different from all others. You won’t be disappointed.”
—**Patti Blagg, Mid-Columbia Community Concert Association**

“If you’ve ever been to a concert and wished you could hear a particular song performed, then SHUFFLE Concert is just for you.”
—**Sandra J. Pennecke, The Beacon, Virginia Beach**

“What happens when an American-Israeli pianist with a doctorate from The Juilliard School leaves a concert bored? He understands that in order to bring young audience members into the concert halls one needs a major shift in perception and he invents the SHUFFLE Concert concept. At a SHUFFLE Concert, you store away the penguin suits and you adopt a term from hi-tech industries: to shuffle, which means to randomly select or choose. Only in this case the audience chooses and not a computer!”
—**Ofer Ein Gal, Pnai Plus**

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“The classical music puritans might have a stroke, but pianist Eliran Avni, who is a rising force in the New York classical music scene, is not worried. When asked whether the project is raising any opposition, Avni answers: ‘The truth is that we still haven’t encountered any major opposition to SHUFFLE—people seem to really love it! SHUFFLE was not created with the intention of replacing the usual classical concert format but as an alternative. And in fact, it really isn’t a classical concert. It’s a completely different beast—which in turn makes it unique and interesting.’”

—*Shai Markovich, Yediot Aharonot (newspaper)*

ADDITIONAL PRESS

- [Stravinsky or Ska? You Call the Shots / Anand Giridharadas for the NY Times, Arts](#)
- [Fuse CD Review: SHUFFLE Concert—an Inspired experiment in “Musical Democracy” / Susan Miron for ArtsFuse Online Magazine](#)
- [Do the Shuffle / Get Classical Blog](#)
- [At a New Theater 1.6.12 / Tammy La Gorce for The NY Times, Arts](#)
- [p. 1 Ready To Shuffle 12.8.11 / Karen Bloom Rockville Center Herald](#)
- [p. 2 Ready To Shuffle 12.8.11 / Karen Bloom for Rockville Center Herald](#)
- [And Now The Shuffle Concert / Eileen Wingard Blog](#)
- [Concert Review Tel Aviv Museum 4.11.11 / Yon Feder Yediot Aharonot](#)
- [Preview Israel Concert Tour / Ofer EinGal, Pnai Plus](#)
- [Audience will select songs 4.22.10 / Sandra J. Pennecke for The Beacon](#)



SHUFFLE Concert

EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

SHUFFLE Concert's Educational Outreach Initiative offers several different modules to organizations and educational institutions that are interested in enriching the musical experience of their audiences. At the heart of the ensemble's mission statement is the desire to expose listeners, both young and old, to beloved and unfamiliar genres of music in a fun and interactive way by allowing them to choose what is played!

A SHUFFLE Concert

Using the ensemble's groundbreaking format of letting the audience select the musical works performed, the event presents a specially crafted menu based on the audience's age group. The goal is to expose listeners to different genres of music, both classical and popular, and challenge the stereotypes and prejudices elicited by the works. The SHUFFLE menu can be created jointly with the presenter to include a variety of styles and works from past and present SHUFFLE Menus. (For examples, see attached SHUFFLE family menu and visit www.ShuffleConcert.com for a concert menu.)

Educational Workshops

Musical Layers

Sonatine for Solo Piano by Maurice Ravel arr. by J. Keren

In a musical work, there is almost always more than one voice or musical line occurring at the same time. Imagine a rainbow: colors building one on top of the other to create a beautiful whole. Music is built in much the same way in a process called layering. This workshop will explore the multilayered aspects of music and will help the listener become more aware of these layers as they come together in the three movements of Ravel's *Sonatine*. This workshop will also address the challenges of orchestrating an existing work, the impressionistic period in music and art, and the importance of classical forms, such as sonata form, the minuet and rondo to later composers.

Shall We Dance? A Musical Journey

Desafinado for Soprano and Ensemble by Carlos A. Jobim / Bossa Nova

"Samba" from *Four Souvenirs* for Clarinet and Piano by Paul Schonfield

Piece in the form of a Habanera for Oboe and Piano by Maurice Ravel

Fugue by Astor Piazzolla / Tango

What is it about the exotic sounds of Latin music that make us want to get up and dance? Maybe it's the mysterious whispers of the habanera rhythm or the long, beautiful melodic lines found in

(EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH Continued)

(Shall We Dance Continued)

The bossa nova. Whatever it is, these sounds can take us on a musical journey without our ever having to board an airplane. In this workshop, listeners will travel to countries such as Spain, Argentina and Brazil; experience some of the rich musical traditions of these places; and explore the specific dance rhythms in a series of interactive activities, including clapping and singing. Other topics explored in this workshop are the fugue and variations.

Instrumental Demonstrations

In this module the ensemble members give entertaining instrumental demonstrations that will provide insights into the history, evolution and the challenges of playing the various instruments. The demonstrations will include musical excerpts from the SHUFFLE Menu to show how the instruments are played, used, and interact with the other instruments in the ensemble. The ensemble includes the following instruments: violin, cello, oboe, clarinet, voice and piano.

Master Classes

SHUFFLE Concert is very passionate about both performing and teaching. The group offers a master class, where students of all musical abilities can play and perform for members of the ensemble. In these meetings the members can offer insights into how to better perform, practice and develop the student's artistry toward a potential professional career in music.

Q&A

SHUFFLE Concert is a truly diverse ensemble with a multitude of backgrounds, talents and insights into what it takes to make it in the highly demanding world of classical music. In this exciting Q&A session the ensemble members share their personal stories about the creation of the ensemble and discuss other major issues concerning music education and performance.



SHUFFLE Outreach performance for 1000 school kids at the McCallum Theatre, CA

(Photo Credit: the McCallum Theatre)

SHUFFLE Concert

INFORMATION PAGE

Musicians: Oboe: Hassan Anderson / Jessica Pearlman*
Violin: Brendan Speltz / Francisco Fullana *
Cello: Sofia Nowik / Linor Katz*/ Sarah Rommel*/ Brook Speltz*
Clarinet: Moran Katz / Stanislav Chernyshev*
Soprano: Ariadne Greif / Adrienne Pardee*
Piano: Eliran Avni

*Indicates alternates. Players alternate performances based on availability and geographical location.

Executive Team:

Creative Director: Eliran Avni
Graphic Designer: Oded Naaman
Executive Producer: Richard Lissemore Inc.
Branding: Matt Quint
PR: Grant Communications

Performance Modules:

SHUFFLE offers presenters three different performance modules to choose from:

1. A SHUFFLE Concert

A concert in which members of the audience choose the pieces performed from a set SHUFFLE Menu. The menu can be tailored to specific audiences both in length and content, such as family or special holiday menus. Presenters are invited to create the performance menu together with the SHUFFLE ensemble and may choose works from the 17 different musical genres offered.

Duration: Option 1: An hour and fifteen minutes, without intermission
Option 2: Two halves, 40 and 35 minutes, with a 10-minute intermission

2. Half and Half

A performance in which the first half is set in advance and the second half is a SHUFFLE Concert. The repertoire presented in the first half can include longer works, such as the complete Ravel *Sonatine*, original compositions written for SHUFFLE by A. Dorman and J. Keren, as well as classical masterpieces such as the Beethoven's Clarinet Trio.

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Duration: Two halves, 40 and 35 minutes, with 10-minute intermission

3. Masterpiece SHUFFLE

In this performance module the audience receives a selected menu of 10 complete masterpieces from which the concert program will be selected. Unlike the regular SHUFFLE, where shorter works are shuffled, this concert experience involves longer works performed in their entirety, such as the complete *Porgy and Bess Suite*, the Telemann Concerto for Recorder, Oboe and Violin, or the Muzcysnki Clarinet Trio.

Duration: Two halves, 40 and 35 minutes, a 10-minute intermission

NOTE: Each of the three performance modules starts and ends with an **ensemble** choice piece of approximately 2 to 3 minutes.

Stage Requirements

- Six stands
- Five chairs for musicians and one piano bench
- A tuned grand piano/baby grand (*not* an upright or keyboard)
- Piano should be tuned the day of the performance
- One microphone on stage left for soprano for pop, jazz and Broadway numbers
- One microphone on stage right for speaking that can be turned on and off
- Basic lighting on stage
- Some light in the audience section, to allow for reading the menu
- One tech rehearsal at the concert venue

Performance Dates and Availability: To be coordinated with Cadenza Artists

Additional Information: Available upon request as well as at www.SHUFFLEconcert.com
Note: video and music clips are available as well on our webpage

Contact Information: Booking Agents: Benjamin Cohen, ben@cadenzaartists.com
Artistic Director: Eliran Avni, Contact@SHUFFLEConcert.com

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or you require any additional information. We are happy to assist you!

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, VIDEOS AND ENSMEBLE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT:
www.SHUFFLECONCERT.com**