

Alfred Brendel

Alfred Brendel studied piano and composition in Zagreb and Graz, completing his piano studies with Edwin Fischer, Paul Baumgartner and Eduard Steuermann. For 60 years he has enjoyed a distinguished international career concentrating on the works of central European composers from Bach to Schoenberg as well as featuring many works by Liszt. He was the first pianist to record Beethoven's complete piano works, and was highly influential in getting Schubert's Piano Sonatas and the Schoenberg Piano Concerto recognised as integral parts of the piano repertoire. He has performed regularly at the world's musical centres and festivals, and with the leading orchestras and conductors, and his extensive discography has contributed to making him one of the most respected artists of our time. His final concert appearance was with the Vienna Philharmonic on 18 December 2008. It was released on CD, together with his last solo recital by Decca.

He has received honorary degrees from many universities including Oxford, Cambridge, Yale and McGill, and was awarded an honorary KBE in 1989. In 1992 he received the Hans von Bülow Medal from the Berlin Philharmonic and was granted Honorary Membership of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra in December 1998. In 2001 he was recipient of the "Lifetime Achievement" awards at the MIDEM Cannes Classical Awards, Deutscher Schallplattenpreis, and the Edison Awards in Holland, as well as of the "Beethoven Ring" from the Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst in Vienna. He has received the Leonie Sonning Prize, the Robert Schumann Prize, the 2002 South Bank Show Classical Music Award, as well as the 2004 Ernst von Siemens Prize, the 2007 Venice Rubinstein Prize "A life for music", the 2008 Karajan Prize, the 2009 Praemium Imperiale in Tokyo and the 2010 Gramophone "Lifetime Achievement" award.

Besides music, literature has remained Alfred Brendel's foremost interest and second occupation. He has published two books of essays, *Musical Thoughts and Afterthoughts* and *Music Sounded Out* the latter of which was awarded the 1990 Royal Philharmonic Society Music Award for writing. A volume of collected essays, *Alfred Brendel on Music*, came out in January 2001 to mark his 70th birthday. There are also three German collections of poems which have been followed by a volume of collected poems, *Spiegelbild und schwarzer Spuk*, as well as translations into French, Italian and Dutch. Two English selections entitled *One Finger Too Many* and *Cursing Bagels* appeared in the Faber Poetry Series. The bilingual edition of collected poems *Playing the Human Game* ('Phaidon Press' 2010) is widely available. A book of conversations with Martin Meyer, *Ausgerechnet ich*, was published in 2001, its English version (2002) bearing the title *The Veil of Order*. His most recent publication in German is *A bis Z eines Pianisten* ('Hanser Verlag' 2012). The English version *A Pianist's A to Z*, subtitled "A Piano Lover's Reader" will be published in September 2013 by Faber, while French, Italian, Spanish and Korean editions are in preparation.

Alfred Brendel has given lectures, poetry readings and masterclasses at the Festivals of Salzburg and Verbier, the Vienna Musikverein and Konzerthaus, the Wigmore Hall in London, and music universities and concert halls throughout Europe. His North American activities included the Juilliard School, New York University, Berkeley, CAL Performances, McGill in Montreal Harvard, Princeton and Yale. He has taught at the Cité de la Musique in Paris, and as guest professor in Cambridge.

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