



Mert Yalniz

Salonen Fellow in the Colburn School Conservatory of Music's Negaunee Conducting Program

Turkish-German conductor, pianist, and composer Mert Yalniz has been described as “extremely individual, charismatic and convincing” (*Osthessen News*), his piano playing as “passionate, enthusiastic and highly virtuosic” (*Braunschweig Newspaper*), and his compositions as a “statement from the new generation” (*Heidelberger Frühling*). This season, Yalniz will make his debut with the NDR Radiophilharmonie in Hanover, where he will conduct Beethoven’s Triple Concerto with pianist Igor Levit, Weber’s Clarinet Concertino, Chausson’s Poème, and Wagner’s Wesendonck Lieder. Yalniz is also a Salonen Fellow in the Negaunee Conducting Program at the Colburn School and on the conducting staff of the San Francisco Symphony, assisting Esa-Pekka Salonen internationally.

Recent performances include Grieg’s Piano Concerto with the Uniorchester Leibniz and Braunschweiger Kammerorchester; Mozart’s Piano Concerto No. 2 with the Göttinger Symphonie Orchester and Deutsches Juristenorchester, Bach’s Concerto in D Minor and Joaquín Turina’s *Rapsodia Sinfonica* with the Beethoven Orchestra Hessen, and Gershwin’s *Rhapsody in Blue* with the chamber orchestra La Tempesta. Yalniz made his debut at the international music festival Heidelberger Frühling, performing excerpts from Frederic Rzewski’s *The People United Will Never Be Defeated* and conducting and playing in his nearly 45-minute long composition *People-Fantasy* for chamber ensemble. In 2023, Yalniz debuted at the KKL as part of the Lucerne Piano Festival and played his first concerts in the United States at the Soundboard Institute, performing classical repertoire, his own compositions, and improvisation. He also participated in the festival Overture of the Heidelberger Frühling and worked with the Ballet of Differences and its director Richard Siegal on their production based on Rzewski’s *The People United Will Never Be Defeated* variations, which he performed in full alongside the choreography.

Yalniz has regularly attended the Panula Academy of Maestro Jorma Panula in Finland and worked with several orchestras on various repertoire, such as Mendelssohn’s *Hebrides* Overture with the Theater für Niedersachsen Philharmonie, Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No. 4 with the Philharmonisches Kammerorchester Wernigerode, and Ravel’s *Ma mère l’oye* and Bizet’s *Carmen* Suite No. 1 with the Pori Sinfonietta. He also attended conducting masterclasses with Joana Mallwitz and the International Conducting Workshop & Academy (ICWA) led by Matthias Bamert and Ken Lam.

Yalniz has won first prizes as a pianist in the national music competition Jugend musiziert as well as the Eduard Söring Prize, a highly regarded special prize from the Deutsche Stiftung Musikleben and the NDR Kultur-Förderpreis. In 2015 and 2017, he was a prize winner at the

International Grottrian-Steinweg Competition in Braunschweig and received a scholarship from the Louis Spohr Gesellschaft. In 2016, Yalniz won the first prize at the International Music Competition for Young Talents in Istanbul and was awarded the special award for Best Musical Interpretation. Additionally, Yalniz won the first prize at the Hamburg Instrumental Competition and received the Trübger Special Prize for Young Pianists which provided him a debut recital at the Laeishalle in Hamburg. In 2022, Yalniz received both the jury prize and the audience prize at the international competition of the 15th Pianale Piano Festival in Fulda. Yalniz has been part of the Yehudi Menuhin Live Music Now Hannover program, visiting social institutions and regularly giving concerts for people who can no longer attend ordinary concerts due to their conditions.

Yalniz has attended piano masterclasses with Bernd Goetzke, Jacques Ammon, Konstanze Eickhorst, Francesco Libetta, Gülsin Onay, Igor Levit, Uta Weyand, Matti Raekallio, William Fong, Markus Schirmer, Filippo Gamba, and Roland Krüger. In 2022, he began studying piano with Igor Levit at the Hanover University of Music, Drama and Media (HMTMH).

Yalniz is a Colburn Artist.