

David S. Baltuch, PhD

Pianist, Composer, Conductor, Pedagogue, and Researcher

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David Baltuch was born in Bucharest, Romania, in 1959.

1. Education

After an initial musical education in solfège, piano, guitar, history of music and chamber music (1969-1978), and a parallel education comprising Mathematics, Latin and Greek (1971-1978), David Baltuch embarked on his professional musical education at the Brussels Royal Conservatoire (1982-2002) where he earned First Prizes¹ in piano, chamber music, harmony, counterpoint, fugue, and orchestral conducting, as well as Superior Diplomas in chamber music and solfège.²

He also earned a Diploma in Orchestral Conducting (2003) at the École Normale Alfred Cortot in Paris and a Certificate in choral conducting (2004) issued by the Association of British Choral Directors (ABCD, London). In 2015, David Baltuch completed a PhD at the Birmingham City University (Birmingham, UK), devoting his doctoral dissertation to the phenomenon of orchestral conducting.

Additionally, David Baltuch studied piano with the Spanish pianist and pedagogue Eduardo del Pueyo (1983-1986) and musicianship with the Belgian composer Marcel Quinet (1986). Between 2002 and 2008, he attended conducting master classes with Benjamin Zander (UK-USA), Dominique Rouits (France), and Bernard Tétu (France).

2. Artistic activities

a. Piano performances

From 1985 to 1995, David Baltuch concertized in Belgium, Luxembourg, Spain, Switzerland, the United States and Israel in solo recitals, chamber music concerts, and solo performances with orchestra. His programs featured works such as the *Symphonic Etudes* by Schumann, the *Mephisto Waltz* by Liszt, *L'Isle Joyeuse* by Debussy, the *Second Piano Sonata* by Prokofiev, the *Violin and Piano Sonata* by Frank, the *First Piano Quartet* by Brahms, the *Two Piano Suite* by Rachmaninoff, the *F Minor Concerto* by Bach, the *Double Piano Concerto* by Mozart and the *Emperor Concerto* by Beethoven. He also recorded several solo works by Bach, Brahms, and Debussy on several compact discs. Additionally, as a pianist/arranger, he recorded a compact disc (1992) devoted to Jewish liturgical music with Rabbi Abraham Dahan at the Beth Hillel Synagogue in Brussels, Belgium. In 2015 David Baltuch performed works by Bartok and Mozart in the Festival de Wallonie, *Les Inattendues* (Tournai, Belgium) and organized a concert devoted to his compositions and works by Alexander von Zemlinsky (Brussels) in which he will also perform.

¹ In Belgium and France, these diplomas were called "First Prizes" until the 2002 Bologna Accord, and they are equivalent to a Bachelors Degree.

² Superior Diplomas are the equivalent to a Masters Degree according to the Bologna Accord.

b. Choral conducting

Between 1994 and 2013, David Baltuch conducted six amateur choirs in Belgium, notably two mixed choirs (La Royale Chorale Uccloise, La Toccat'Anne, and Le Choeur de La Vallée), a children's choir (La Petite Vallée), a female choir (Ottavina) and a chamber choir (Canto XX4), performing works such as the Brahms *Zigeuner Lieder*, the Mozart *Requiem* and *Coronation Mass*, the Dvorak *Stabat Mater*, *Carmina Burana* by Orff in a staged performance, the *Choral Hymns from the Rig Veda* by Holst, and the children's opera *Brundibar* by Hans Krasa.

c. Orchestral conducting

As an assistant orchestral conductor, David Baltuch participated orchestral camps held in Belgium, France, England and Russia between 1995 and 2002. Between 1996 and 2011, he conducted three amateur orchestras (the youth string orchestra Tutti Crescendo in Namur, Belgium, the symphonic orchestra La Domenica in Brussels, Belgium and the Nivelles Symphonic Orchestra in Nivelles, Belgium) performing works such as the Bach *Third Brandenburg Concerto* and Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* as well as the *Coriolan* and *Egmont Overtures* and the *Elgar Serenade* op. 20. He also recorded the piano concertos by Grieg, Schumann and the American pianist/composer James Raphael with the Black Sea Philharmonic (Constanta, Romania) in 2003. Additionally, he conducted the Gypsy band Taraf de Haïduks (Brussels) and recorded with them the compact disc *Maskarada*, produced in 2007 by Crammed Discs, featuring classical music performed in Gypsy style.

d. Composition

David Baltuch's catalogue includes choral and instrumental music. His work *La Belle e(S)t La Bête* for four singers and a cappella choir was premiered in 2009 at the Royal Conservatory of Brussels with his chamber choir Canto XX4. His ten piano etudes *Dix Symétries* were premiered in Brussels and the cello version of his work *Réquisitoire* was premiered in Evere (Belgium), both in October 2015. Both works have received grants from the Belgian government (Communauté française de Belgique). Other works include string quartets, two Hebrew melodies, an octet for cellos, and a work for four singers and marimba.

e. Pedagogy

From 1979 to 1994, David Baltuch was a professor of piano, music analysis and harmony in the Belgian government-supported network of music academies. He is the director of the Music Academy of Farciennes (Belgium) between 1994 and 2017.

f. Lectures

David Baltuch has given conferences (1995 – 2012) about the musical phenomenon, discussing subjects such as Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony*, Varèse's *Ionisation*, Stravinsky's *Dumbarton Oaks* and the conducting process, the latter of which he developed in lectures given in Birmingham (UK), Helsinki and in Brussels. The Brussels conference (2012) allowed him to conduct a chamber version of Mahler's *Second Symphony* as a case study. In 2016 David Baltuch was invited by the University of Oxford and the University of Canterbury to present papers, respectively, about the phenomenon of orchestral conducting and the semiosis of concert.

3. **Projects**

As a pedagogue, he is currently preparing a course on the semiotics of musical performance as well as seminars for conductors that will be based on his doctoral research on orchestral conducting. His compositional projects include a symphonic work *Océans* that will express the beauties and mysteries of the deep seas, and an oratorio *Les Tribulations de l'Âme* which will centre on the religious mores

that different civilisations in different epochs developed regarding the concept of death. This oratorio, inspired by man's common concern towards this subject, will underline our common heritage as human beings.

4. Artistic philosophy

David Baltuch adopts a wide angle regarding music and music sharing as suggested by his education and professional activities. As another testimony to this wide angle, in addition to the abovementioned artistic activities and parallel to his classical music education, he also played bass-guitar in a rock band as teenager (1973 – 1976) performing standards by groups such as Led Zeppelin, The Who and Deep Purple, as well original compositions. Underlying this diversity of activities is his strong belief that music can create a better world, that good music can assume many forms, that music should be taught and learned worldwide as a cultural and humanizing device, and, finally, that music is not only a sentimental and aesthetic experience, but also a social and intellectual event that could be described with words in addition to being composed and performed with sounds.

David Baltuch speaks French, English, Dutch, Hebrew, and Romanian.