



Lowell Liebermann • Composer • Pianist

Official Long Biography

“Now brazen and glittering, now radiantly visionary...the work of a composer unafraid of grand gestures and openhearted lyricism,” —*Time Magazine*

Among America’s internationally heralded composers, Lowell Liebermann stands out as an artist who defies easy categorization. Performed by illustrious orchestras and soloists throughout the world, his music has delighted listeners and critics alike. He is that rare phenomenon: a composer of immense popularity and lasting profundity.

In the 2025-2026 season, Mr. Liebermann's works feature on programs performed around the world. The fall of 2025 sees the premiere of Chamber Concerto No. 3, commissioned by the Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival, before Mr. Liebermann travels to Atlanta where he will deliver the keynote address at the National Flute Association convention. Trio Revolution continues its tour performing his Trio No. 2 for Flute, Cello, and Piano, Op. 87 in Austria and the US. Pianist Jonathan Mamora will present the New York premiere of Moment Musical Op. 144 at Carnegie Hall. The San Francisco Ballet will give three performances of *Frankenstein*, Op. 130, Ballet in 3 Acts, choreographed by Liam Scarlett, with Martin West conducting the Pacific Symphony in Costa Mesa, California.

In 2026, the world premiere of "The Second Coming" features soprano Jasmine Habersham and the Rochester Philharmonic under the direction of Andreas Delfs. The Concerto for Alto Saxophone and Orchestra, Op. 145 will receive its US premiere at the University of Iowa, which commissioned the work, where Mr. Liebermann will serve as the Ida Cordelia Beam Distinguished Visiting Professor. The performance will mark the third premiere performance by saxophonist Kenneth Tse, who gave the world premiere in Armenia and the Asian premiere in China. Spring 2026 brings the European and UK premieres of Concerto No. 2 for Flute and Orchestra Op. 142. The Iceland Symphony Orchestra will perform with flutist Stefán Ragnar Höskuldsson, and the London Symphony Orchestra with Gareth Davies.

One of the most frequently performed and recorded composers of America, Mr. Liebermann has written more than one hundred forty works in all genres, several

of which have gone on to become standard repertoire for their instruments. His Sonata for Flute and Piano and his Gargoyles for piano are among the most popular contemporary works for their instruments, regularly included in recital and competition programs. Each of them has been recorded on compact disc more than twenty-five times to date. His full-length ballet *Frankenstein* was co-commissioned by London's Royal Ballet and the San Francisco Ballet and has been released on Blu-Ray and DVD. The San Francisco Ballet Orchestra under the baton of Martin West has also released the complete score on Reference Recordings.

2024 saw the unveiling of Mr. Liebermann's Flute Concerto No. 2, commissioned and played by the Chicago Symphony, led by conductor Susanna Mälkki with principal flutist Stefán Ragnar Höskuldsson performing as soloist. "...one of the most eagerly anticipated events this season throughout the flute community. And the actual performances have exceeded the fever pitch of expectation," wrote Cate Hummel in the March 26, 2024 edition of the *Flute Examiner*. "The big reveal was the first performance of Lowell Liebermann's Flute Concerto No. 2, Op. 142, according to M.L. Rantala March 25, 2024 in hpherald.com. And he added, "This seemed to be a match made in heaven. Liebermann's previous works for flute have been wildly successful, gaining adherents as famous as James Galway. What I loved most about Liebermann's new concerto is that it has a marvelous sense of propulsion to it. Whether the tempo is fast or slow, the music unfolds like a ribbon caught in a breeze. There is a clear shape and purpose and swirling beauty."

"At CSO A Rare World Premiere Shines," reads the headline to Hannah Edgar's Chicago Tribune review March 24, 2024. "Premiered by Sir James Galway in 1992, Liebermann's first flute concerto was a professional turning point in his career for this dean-to-be of American neo-romanticism, and it remains one of his most frequently recorded works...Liebermann's Second is a fine follow-up to that modern classic."

In the words of long-time music critic Alex Ross of *The New Yorker*: "Lowell Liebermann is an epicure among American composers, savoring glittery chords, gossamer lines, and velvety textures that more self-consciously intellectual colleagues might be scared to put on paper." And according to *The Atlantic*: "[His] music combines rich, unabashed emotions with an energy...shot through with expressive melody, brilliantly orchestrated, paced with unerring dramatic flair...crafted with passion and art."

Other recent highlights included the world premiere of Mr. Liebermann's Organ Concerto, performed by distinguished organist Paul Jacobs with the Jacksonville Symphony and conductor Courtney Lewis. This concerto was jointly commissioned by the Jacksonville Symphony and the Oregon Bach Festival. In October 2023, at Stern Hall at Carnegie Hall, the Kazakh State Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Andreas Delfs performed two of Mr. Liebermann's works, his Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 74 and his Chamber Concerto No. 1, Op. 28a for Violin, Piano, and String Orchestra featuring violinist Aiman Mussakhajayeva and Mr. Liebermann at the piano. The same week, at the popular, off-beat Crypt Sessions in uptown New York City, Three Dances from Frankenstein received its US premiere by Gilmore Young Artist Maxim Lando and the Joffrey Ballet gave the Chicago premiere of Mr. Liebermann's Frankenstein with choreography by Liam Scarlett and stage design by John MacFarlane at the Lyric Opera.

Not content to compose, Mr. Liebermann excels as a solo pianist both live and in recording. When he performed at the piano in his own work with the Kazakh State Symphony Orchestra at Carnegie Hall's Stern Hall last fall, Harry Rolnick, writing for concertonet, marveled at his playing:

Yet it was the following Chamber Concerto for violin, piano and abbreviated orchestra which was absolutely mesmerizing. Part of it was the exotic colors, the undulating quivers and quasi-Eastern scale passages. Ms. Mussakhajayeva was quite brilliant here. But the awards had to go to the composer on piano. Mr. Liebermann has never appeared in Carnegie Hall as soloist which is a shame. Though his sensitivity, his balance, his tasteful yet rarely aggressive lines had the beauty of a Gothic edifice.
—concertonet, October 9, 2023

Mr. Liebermann has served as Artistic Director of "Thornwillow Concerts at Calvary" in Newburgh, NY since fall of 2023. Monthly classical concerts take place at the renovated Calvary Presbyterian Church, which houses a newly restored historic Skinner pipe organ and a Steinway Model D Concert Grand. As part of the series, he partnered as pianist with countertenor Daniel Moody in a performance of Schubert's canonic song cycle "Winterreise." For this concert Mr. Liebermann created a new translation from the German, which is published by Thornwillow Press.

Mr. Liebermann has given the world premieres of his own solo piano works as well as works by his fellow composers Ned Rorem and William Bolcolm. In 2021, the

Steinway label released Liebermann's debut album as piano soloist to critical acclaim: "Personal Demons," a compendium of music that has shaped Liebermann's musical thought, including works by Schubert, Liszt, Kármán, Busoni's monumental Fantasia Contrappuntistica, and works by Liebermann himself. The following year, in 2022, the Steinway & Sons label sponsored a second solo piano album by Mr. Liebermann, The Devil's Lyre, featuring music of contemporary British composer David Hackbridge Johnson. An album of piano music by German Romantic composer Theodor Kirchner was released in fall of 2023. A Steinway artist, Mr. Liebermann made his Berlin debut performing his Piano Quintet with members of the Berlin Philharmonic.

The celebrated flutist Sir James Galway has commissioned three major works from Mr. Liebermann: Concerto for Flute and Orchestra, Concerto for Flute, Harp and Orchestra, and Trio No. 1 for Flute, Cello and Piano. Sir James premiered the Flute Concerto with the St. Louis Symphony under Leonard Slatkin and subsequently performed it with James Levine and the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra at Carnegie Hall. He recorded three of Mr. Liebermann's concertos for RCA Red Seal with the composer conducting the London Mozart Players.

Mr. Liebermann has written two full-length operas, both enthusiastically received at their premieres: The Picture of Dorian Gray, the first American opera commissioned by and premiered in 1995 by l'Opéra de Monte-Carlo, and Miss Lonelyhearts, after the novel by Nathanael West, commissioned and presented by the Juilliard School to celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2005. In recognition of his contribution to the art of writing for the voice, Mr. Liebermann was awarded the inaugural Virgil Thomson Award (with a \$40,000 prize) given for outstanding composition of vocal works; the citation, announced May 21, 2014 at the ceremony at the American Academy of Arts and Letters, read as follows:

Long since acknowledged a master of orchestral and chamber music, Lowell Liebermann has all along had an exemplary career as a composer of vocal music. In his settings—songs, sequences, operas—he is sensitive to the text and to the voice, while sustaining them with music that radiates both grace and gravity. Their pulse is quickened by his intelligence and virtuosity. The traditions of vocal music are honored, even as Liebermann extends them in directions that are emotionally rich.

Mr. Liebermann has composed four symphonies, a Concerto for Orchestra, three piano concertos, and concertos for many other instruments. His Symphony No. 2

was commissioned and premiered by the Dallas Symphony under the baton of Andrew Litton, in celebration of the orchestra's centenary in February 2000. This concert was the ground-breaking first webcast ever of an orchestral concert. Mr. Liebermann's Piano Concerto No. 2 was commissioned by Steinway & Sons and premiered by Stephen Hough with the National Symphony under the direction of Mstislav Rostropovich. The Hyperion recording of the concerto - conducted by the composer - received a GRAMMY® Award nomination for Best Contemporary Classical Composition. The New York Philharmonic with Kurt Masur and principal trumpet Philip Smith presented the premiere of Mr. Liebermann's Trumpet Concerto, which the Wall Street Journal described as "balancing bravura and a wealth of attractive musical ideas to create a score that invites repeated listening." He has also been commissioned by the Emerson String Quartet and the Philadelphia Orchestra.

With over one hundred fifty releases on labels such as Deutsche Grammophon, Hyperion, Virgin Classics, Hungaroton, New World Records, Albany, RCA Red Seal, Reference, and many others, Mr. Liebermann has amassed a remarkable discography. His works are published by Theodore Presser Company, Schott, and Faber Music. He has been invited to serve as Composer-in-Residence for numerous distinguished organizations including the Dallas Symphony Orchestra for four years; the Pacific Music Festival in Sapporo, Japan; and the Saratoga Performing Arts Center. Mr. Liebermann has been a faculty member of the Composition Department of the Mannes School of Music of the New School since 2012. In addition to mentoring numerous young students, he was the founding conductor of the Mannes American Composers Ensemble, devoted to performing works of living American composers.

Mr. Liebermann is the recipient of many awards and distinctions, among them the CAG Virtuoso Award given by Concert Artists Guild for lifetime achievement, and Grand Prize from the inaugural American Composers Invitational awarded by the Van Cliburn Competition. In 2016 he was awarded the Barto Prize for his Eighth Nocturne for solo piano. He has been honored multiple times by the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

He lives in the New York City area with his partner, pianist and conductor William Hobbs.

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Updated January 2026. Please destroy earlier versions.



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