

**Round Midnight: My Late Night Gallery**  
**andrew rangell**

**Music of**  
**Tisdall, Bach,**  
**Wolpe, Beethoven,**  
**Mozart, Stravinsky,**  
**Brahms, Ravel,**  
**Chopin**  
**and Feurzeig**



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**Round Midnight: My Late Night Gallery** The works comprising this recital are (with two brash exceptions) rather intimate and inward-looking. Some are unfamiliar as well, being outside of the repertorial mainstream. For me all these pieces tend to bear out Frances Bacon's dictum: "There is no excellent beauty that hath not some strangeness in the proportion." This applies, I feel, even to the better known works, but is perhaps heightened in one's experience of the newly encountered: Tisdall, Wolpe, Bach(!), Beethoven (!), Brahms transcriptions, and even Mozart's peculiar and powerful *Fantasy and Fugue*.

A few facts and observations follow.

Almost nothing is known about William Tisdall ( b.1570?), unlike his celebrated contemporaries Byrd, Gibbons, Bull, and others of the English Virginalist School. Chromatic clashes saturate this poignant, almost dream-like pavane.

Bach published four "Duets" in volume three (1735) of his four volume "Keyboard Practice" (a compendium which includes the *Partitas*, *Goldberg Variations*, and other works). They are extended, playfully erudite, two-part inventions. The E minor is a heady blend of chromaticism, off-beat rhythms, and scalar patterns in strict canon.

Stefan Wolpe's 1941 Pastorale was dedicated to the pianist Jack Maxin (a youngster of twelve at the time) who later taught at the New England Conservatory for many years. This concentrated gem begins as a two-part invention, yet blossoms unexpectedly into full throated song...

The present arrangement of the plaintive, gently agitated "poco allegretto" movement from Brahms' G major viola quintet rests on a contemporaneous arrangement by Grützmacher. For me it is a special joy to render this heartfelt piece on piano. In 1896 Brahms composed his final work, Eleven Chorale-preludes, Op. 122. Number eight, "Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen" (A Rose Breaks into Bloom) was transcribed, along with several others, for piano by Busoni. (It's opening notes instantly call to mind Nat Cole's hit tune "Mona Lisa" ....!) Opp. 76 No. 4, 117 No. 2, and 116 No. 5 are among Brahms' more introspective intermezzi, the latter being certainly the composer's most enigmatic.

Beethoven's F minor prelude, practically unknown, while certainly in print, creates an improvisation in Bachian texture, modest but possessing its own aura and sense of purpose. A bagatelle like no other.

Also seeming to stand apart is Mozart's C major *Fantasy and Fugue*, an intense and highly uncharacteristic creation of its maker. The fantasy's restless insistence is "Baroque" yet stylistically difficult to pinpoint. Brusque and compact, the fugue is bouncily Handellian, while peppered with dissonance. And it pulls out all the contrapuntal stops. In toto, this is a singular production!

No one but Chopin (only twenty-one when his early B major nocturne was written) could have conjured the particular lilting chromatic melancholy of the opening music, which enfolds a darkly turbulent contrasting section in B minor. A dreamily delicate coda concludes this perfect piece.

Ravel was, to a degree, Chopin's 20th century counterpart, at least where the piano is concerned. His *Pavane for a Dead Princess* (perhaps even better known in its orchestral version) and *Jeux d'eau*, both early works, exhibit qualities of fastidious craft, balance, and striking originality. The *Pavane* is a magical fusion of the formal and the intimate, an intersection which suited Ravel's imagination wonderfully. An inward dimension, sometimes overlooked, seems to me always present in the imaginative virtuosity of *Jeux d'eau* (as in his later *Ondine*). Again, a double-edged achievement.

It is reported that Stravinsky's *Piano-Rag Music* was the composer's response to being shown (by Ansermet, in Switzerland, 1919) sheet music of American ragtime. A brilliant, wicked and highly un-American response, to be sure! What goes around comes around, they say, and David Feurzeig's riposte to Stravinsky, "Stride-Rite", takes snippets from "The Rite..." insistently and hilariously Americanizing them. TOUCHÉ!

– Andrew Rangell

Recorded May 26-27, 2025 at the Shalin Liu Performance Center, Rockport, Massachusetts.

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*Round Midnight* is **andrew rangell's** most recent addition to a very large and diverse collection of recordings documenting this pianist's musical journey of four decades. At its center is a comprehensive, ever-probing, imaginative exploration of all of Bach's major harpsichord works and of most Beethoven sonatas, Diabelli variations, and fascinating lesser works. Over the years, Mr. Rangell has lovingly interpreted repertoire ranging from Sweelinck, Gibbons, Farnaby, and Froberger to 20th century voices such as Ives, Nielsen, Enescu, Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Janacek, Mompou, and many others. Not to mention composers working today.

Andrew Rangell made his New York debut as winner of the Malraux Award of the Concert Artists' Guild, and has since performed and lectured throughout the United States, and in Europe, Israel, and China. He has also taught on the faculties of Dartmouth, Middlebury, and Tufts University. In the 1980s, already recognized as a distinctive recitalist and collaborative artist, Mr. Rangell gained national attention – and the award of an Avery Fisher Career Grant – for his vivid traversals of the complete Beethoven sonata-cycle in New York, Boston, Cleveland, Rochester, Denver, and other U.S. Cities. A hand injury sustained in 1991 forced Mr. Rangell to gradually alter the trajectory of his career, and eventually to place his highest priority on recording. In a different area, Steinway has made available 3 music videos created by Mr. Rangell which integrate his talents as author, illustrator, narrator and pianist. They are: *Sammy Snake's Lucky Day*, *What Sal Heard* and *The Story of Peter Pajamas*, and they can be found on YouTube.

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- 1 **William Tisdall**  
Pavana Chromatica 4:25
- 2 **Johann Sebastian Bach**  
Duetto No. 1 in E minor, BWV 802 2:53
- 3 **Stefan Wolpe**  
Pastorale (1941) 2:37
- 4 **Johannes Brahms**  
String Quintet No. 2, Op. 111: III. Un poco allegretto 6:48
- 5 **Ludwig van Beethoven**  
Prelude in F Minor, WoO 55 2:23
- 6 **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**  
Fantasia and Fugue in C major, K 394/383a 10:10
- 7 **Johannes Brahms**  
Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen, Op. 122 No. 8  
(A Rose Breaks into Bloom) 2:06
- 8 **Johannes Brahms**  
Intermezzo in B flat major, Op. 76 No. 4 2:37
- 9 **Johannes Brahms**  
Intermezzo in B flat minor, Op. 117 No. 2 5:07
- 10 **Frédéric Chopin**  
Nocturne in B major, Op. 9 No. 3 7:34
- 11 **Johannes Brahms**  
Intermezzo in E minor, Op. 116 No. 5 3:38
- 12 **Maurice Ravel**  
Jeux d'eau 6:59
- 13 **Igor Stravinsky**  
Piano-Rag-Music (1919) 3:32
- 14 **David Feurzeig**  
Stride Rite (2003) 3:30
- 15 **Maurice Ravel**  
Pavane pour une infante défunte 6:15

**Playing Time: 70:42**



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