

## The Cambridge Companion to Arvo Pärt

Arvo Pärt is one of the most influential and widely performed contemporary composers. Around 1976 he developed an innovative new compositional technique called 'tintinnabuli' (Latin for 'sounding bells'), with which he has had an extraordinary degree of success. His music is frequently performed around the world and has been used in award-winning films, and pieces such as *Für Alina* and *Spiegel im Spiegel* have become standard repertoire. This collection of essays, written by a distinguished international group of scholars and performers, is the essential guide to Arvo Pärt, and his music. The book begins with a general introduction to Pärt's life and works, covering important biographical details and outlining his most significant compositions. Two chapters analyze the tintinnabuli style and are complemented by essays which discuss Pärt's creative process. The book also examines the spiritual aspect of Pärt's music, and contextualizes him in the cultural milieu of the twenty-first century and in the marketplace.

ANDREW SHENTON is Associate Professor of Music at Boston University.

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EDITED BY  
Andrew Shenton  
*Boston University, USA*



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For Nora Pärt

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**Immo Mihkelson** is currently a freelance music journalist who, since the end of the 1980s, has covered a wide spectrum of music from pop to avant-garde in different Estonian language media (printed press, radio, and TV). For four years he was a music editor for Estonian Radio and spent ten years working for *Postimees*, Estonia's largest circulation daily paper. For Pärt's seventieth birthday in 2005 he produced a fourteen-part radio series entitled *Arvo Pärt: 70* (first aired on Estonian Radio's serious music channel *Klassikaraadio*). The series covered several aspects of the composer's life and work and was made in collaboration with the composer himself, who kindly shared his opinions and explanations with listeners. Recently he has been working as music editor for the Estonian central culture magazine *Teater. Muusika. Kino* (Theatre, Music, and Cinema). Mihkelson is connected with the International Arvo Pärt Centre in Laulasmaa and is currently working on a book which focuses on Pärt's life and work in Soviet Estonia from 1935 to 1980.

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**Andrew Shenton** studied at the Royal College of Music in London, where he read for a BM degree at London University and was an organ scholar at St Paul's Cathedral. In 1991 he moved to the USA to study for an MM at Yale University and then for a PhD in musicology at Harvard University. Professor Shenton holds the Fellowship diploma of the Royal College of Organists and has toured extensively in Europe and the USA as a conductor, recitalist, and clinician. His two solo organ recordings have received international acclaim. He has been the recipient of numerous scholarships and awards including Harvard's Certificate of Distinction in Teaching and a Junior Fellowship from Boston University's Center

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**Benjamin Skipp** is College Lecturer and Tutor in Music at Hertford College, University of Oxford, where he teaches a number of history courses, analysis, and practical musicianship. He studied at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama before matriculating at Christ Church, Oxford, where he took his bachelor's degree in Music. While a Junior Research Fellow at St. Peter's College, Oxford, he completed his doctorate on 'Late Minimalism.' His research is focused on the way that composers throughout time have taken a reductive or minimalist approach to musical material, and the way that these approaches have been received by critics and audiences. In particular, he has written articles, presented papers at international conferences, and spoken on radio on the work of Arvo Pärt. He is also a professional oboist who performs and teaches in the UK.

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**Plate 0.1** From left to right: Thomas Robinson, Laura Dolp, Andrew Shenton, Jeffers Engelhardt, Arvo Pärt, Leopold Brauneiss, Marguerite Bostonia. Canterbury, England, May 2011.

## Acknowledgements

First and foremost, thanks are due Arvo Pärt and his family for their generous cooperation during the preparation of this book and to Eric Marintisch of Universal Edition, who was a gracious liaison.

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For this collection of essays I am profoundly grateful to the contributors for their willingness to turn spoken papers into readable ones and for their expertise in so many areas. Collectively, we wish to thank the staff at the International Arvo Pärt Centre, Micah Conti, Andrew Kohn, Aygün Lausch, and Linda Sabak.

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Finally, the contributors and I acknowledge the enormous amount of work done by Nora Pärt in support of her husband's music over many decades. We dedicate this collection to her.

Andrew Shenton  
Boston, December 2011



## Editor's notes

In preparing this collection for publication I have been guided by the following principles:

Language: all translations are by the respective authors unless otherwise noted. The original language for quotations has been omitted unless the source is unpublished or the meaning obscure and subject to more than the usual degree of interpretation.

Because the contributors are an international group of scholars their essays retain their individual voices; however, grammar, spelling and punctuation conform to Cambridge University Press house style except where an original differs, in which case it is given precedence. Some titles of Pärt's works had been rendered entirely in lower-case letters as part of Universal Edition and ECM Records house style. For this volume they have been normalized with initial capitals where appropriate.

The psalms have two different numbering systems because the fourth-century translator Jerome used the Greek numbering (Septuaginta) for his Latin translation of the Bible, called the Vulgate. Traditionally psalms in Latin follow this numbering. Pärt generally uses this numbering when he uses Latin text and the more common Hebrew Bible number for pieces where the text is in any other language. This text follows Pärt's usage in his scores, and in the works list starting on page 203 offers parenthetical numbers for clarification.

## Chronology

- 1935 Born on 11 September in Paide, Estonia.  
 1938 Moved to Rakvere, Estonia.  
 1945–53 Rakvere Music School, piano studies with Ille Martin; first attempts at composition.  
 1950–54 Rakvere High School.  
 1954 Tallinn Conservatory (formerly Tallinn Music School), composition studies with Veljo Tormis.  
 1954–56 Military service, playing oboe, percussion and piano in the Military Band.  
 1956 Continuation of studies at music college.  
 1957–63 Tallinn Conservatory (now Estonian Academy of Music), composition studies with Heino Eller.  
 1958–67 Sound engineer at Estonian Radio.  
 1961 Became member of the Estonian Soviet Composers' Union.  
 1962 Young Composers Forum Moscow, First Prize for *Our Garden* and the oratorio *Stride of the World*.  
 1967–80 Freelance composer in Tallinn.  
 1968 *Credo*, conclusion of his first creative period.  
 1968–76 Period of artistic reorientation.  
 1976 *Für Alina*, birth of the tintinnabuli technique of composition.  
 1976–77 Composed fifteen tintinnabuli works, including *Tabula Rasa*, *Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten*, *Fratres*.  
 1980 Emigration to Vienna; contract with the publisher Universal Edition.  
 1981–82 German Academic Exchange Service fellowship from the Deutschen Akademischen Austauschdienstes (DAAD), Berlin.  
 1984 Beginning of the creative collaboration with the CD label ECM; all authorised first recordings of major works with ECM.  
 1989 Classical Edison Award for *Passio* (ECM 1370).  
 1989 Grammy Nomination for *Passio*, 'Best Contemporary Composition.'  
 1990 Honorary Doctorate, Music Academy of Tallinn Estonia.  
 1991 Grammy Nomination for *Miserere*, 'Best Contemporary Composition.'  
 1991 Honorary Membership, Royal Swedish Academy for Music, Stockholm.  
 1992 Returned to Estonia.  
 1996 Honorary Membership, American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York.  
 1996 Honorary Doctorate, University of Sydney, Australia.  
 1997 Grammy Nomination for *Kanon Pokajanen*, 'Best Contemporary Composition.'  
 1997 Independent Russian Arts Award 'Triumph,' Moscow.  
 1998 Second-class Order of the National Coat of Arms, Republic of Estonia.

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- 1998 Culture Award of the Estonian Republic.  
 1998 Honorary Doctorate, University of Tartu, Estonia.  
 2000 Herder Award, Germany.  
 2000 Nominated as 14th International Composer for the year 2000 by the Royal Academy of Music in London.  
 2001 Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres de la République Française.  
 2001 Honorary Membership, Royal Academy of Arts (Académie Royale des sciences, des lettres et des beaux-arts), Belgium.  
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 2003 Borderland Award, Sejny, Poland.  
 2003 Grammy Nomination for *Orient & Occident*, 'Best Contemporary Composition.'  
 2003 Grammy Nomination for *Orient Occident*, 'Best Classical Album' (ECM 1795).  
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 2003 Composition Trophy C. A. Seghizzi for his choral work, Gorizia, Italy.  
 2004 Borderland Award, Sejny, Poland.  
 2004 Honorary Membership, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Rome.  
 2005 Musical America's Award 'Composer of the Year.'  
 2005 European Church Music Prize, Germany.  
 2006 First class Order of the National Coat of Arms, Republic of Estonia.  
 2007 Grammy Award for *Da Pacem*, 'Best Choral Recording' (Harmonia Mundi 097401).  
 2007 Honorary Doctorate, University of Freiburg Faculty of Theology, Germany.  
 2007 International 'Brückepreis,' city of Görlitz, Zgorzelec.  
 2007 Baltic Star Award, St. Petersburg, Russia.  
 2008 Austrian Medal of Honour First Class for Science and Arts.  
 2008 Sonning Music Prize, Denmark.  
 2009 Lifelong Achievement Award of the Republic of Estonia.  
 2009 Honorary Doctorate, Université de Liège, Belgium.  
 2010 Baltic Image Enhancement Award, USA.  
 2010 Grammy Nomination for *In Principio*, 'Best Classical Contemporary Composition' (ECM New Series).  
 2010 Lifetime achievement prize at the Istanbul Music Festival.  
 2010 Honorary Doctorate, University of St. Andrews, UK (announced 2009).  
 2011 Grammy Nomination for Symphony No. 4, 'Best Classical Contemporary Composition.'  
 2011 Classic BRIT Award for 'Composer of the Year,' London.  
 2011 Ordre nationale de la Légion d'honneur.