

# Solti Studio Concerts: 'Fidelio'

Arranged for piano duet by Alexander Zemlinsky

Pianists: Joseph Havlat and Chad Vindin

Full video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jFRt-SuSatI>

- In the February 2021 issue of Opera Magazine, John Allison has penned the review below:

## Fidelio

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As an imaginative and unusual coda to the Beethoven year, this performance of Alexander Zemlinsky's four-hand piano version—no singers—of *Fidelio* is the latest (and second to move online) in the series of Solti Studio Concerts presented by Valerie Solti with Norman and Manuela Rosenthal. The arrangement is a fascinating piece in its own right, a rarity I had previously known only via the recording by Maki Namekawa and Dennis Russell Davies; completed in 1902, it is one of several opera (and oratorio) transcriptions for Universal Edition's home market made by a hard-working composer who needed to support his extended family, including even his new brother-in-law, Schoenberg. Two young Australian-born pianists, Joseph Havlat and Chad Vindin, give a performance that due to Covid-19 circumstances was shifted at the last minute from the Solti house in Hampstead to the extravagant 'hanging gardens' of an artist's studio at the Peckham Sausage Factory. They relish the opportunities of this *blanc et noir* medium to reveal the workings of Beethoven's music. If without voices the Quintet loses a little of its sublimity, this is compensated for by increased intimacy—even a sense of the composer himself musing over the creation of his singular masterpiece. Sensibly, the melodrama indicated for No. 12 ('Wie kalt ist es') is left unspoken. Havlat and Vindin supply all the virtuosity required but also a sense of domestic music-making and delight in the work itself, giving a highly enjoyable performance that takes on a dramatic life of its own. JOHN ALLISON

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- Canadian Classical Music site *Ludwig van Toronto* selected *Fidelio* for their critic's picks of the week, January 11-17. Review provided below:

<https://www.ludwig-van.com/toronto/2021/01/11/critics-picks-virtual-concerts-absolutely-need-se-e-week-streaming-edition-january-11-17/>

6) **The Solti Studio Concerts | Fidelio**. If the Bottesini is unusual, how about Beethoven's complete Fidelio as a piano duet? No singers, no orchestra, no dialogue, just two pianists (Joseph Havlat and Chad Vindin), a Bosendorfer, and lots of enthusiasm. Arranged by Alexander Zemlinsky in 1905. This performance is under the auspices of Valerie Pitts, also known as Lady Solti, the widow of conductor Georg Solti. Dedicated to the memory of Otto Klemperer and Georg Solti. A very enjoyable curiosity.

Joseph So, Professor Emeritus at Trent University and Associate Editor of Opera Canada