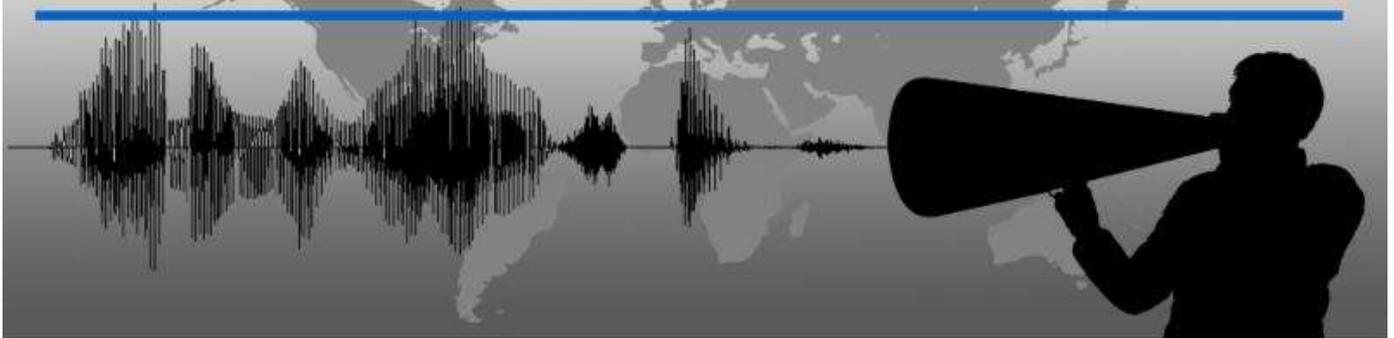
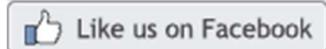


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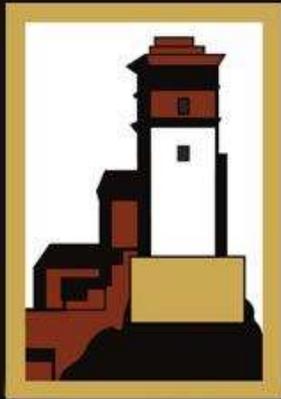
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Guest Editorial

All About the Musicians

An old audiophile friend of mine, who is now living in South Carolina, introduced me to Yarlung Records, a record label that makes really high-quality recordings. This company has recently added analog master tapes to its available media, and this prompted me to get in touch with the founder, Bob Attiyeh, to find out more. A phone call from Attiyeh himself ensued to tell me all about the organization. It soon became clear that Yarlung Records is not just producing top quality audio recordings, it is also supporting its growing list of young musicians.



YARLUNG RECORDS

YOUNG · PROVOCATIVE · ENGAGING

Bob Attiyeh, a former history major at Princeton University and now a recording engineer, has been a connoisseur of classical music for many years. As a young child, he would listen to chamber music and opera at home and tag along with his parents to concerts. Today, he occasionally performs as a vocalist, but his passion is discovering and recording young artists.

Before starting Yarlung Records, Attiyeh worked as a freelance recording engineer. He recorded albums for Southland Opera, which is based in southern California, as well as for composers of new music. Yarlung is named after a valley in Tibet where Attiyeh made some of his first recordings. There is a Tibetan legend about the valley that holds that, for a brief moment, heaven and earth touched in this valley. Attiyeh says, "For me, this intersection of the earthly and divine realm provides a wonderful metaphor for music." He started Yarlung Records as a US charitable institution that produced CDs for young classical musicians. He now also releases his recordings on high-quality vinyl, high-resolution digital and, most recently, studio-master analog tape.

But why a US charitable institution? The answer is that the profits from the sale of the recordings, plus donations from supporters and recording underwriters, are used to support young musicians. Yarlung Artists is a 501(c)(3) organization (an organization that is exempt from federal income tax) and raises money to support these young musicians as they begin their international concert careers. Being a 501(c)(3) organization, personal gifts to Yarlung Artists could also be matched by a person's employer, as many employers sponsor matching gift programs and match charitable contributions made by their employees, retirees and/or employees' spouses, and thus provide further support of Yarlung's musicians.

The company's board of directors, executive producers and special advisers help Yarlung record, market, and distribute debut albums for select young concert artists to help them gain stature and visibility with their audiences, critics and peers.

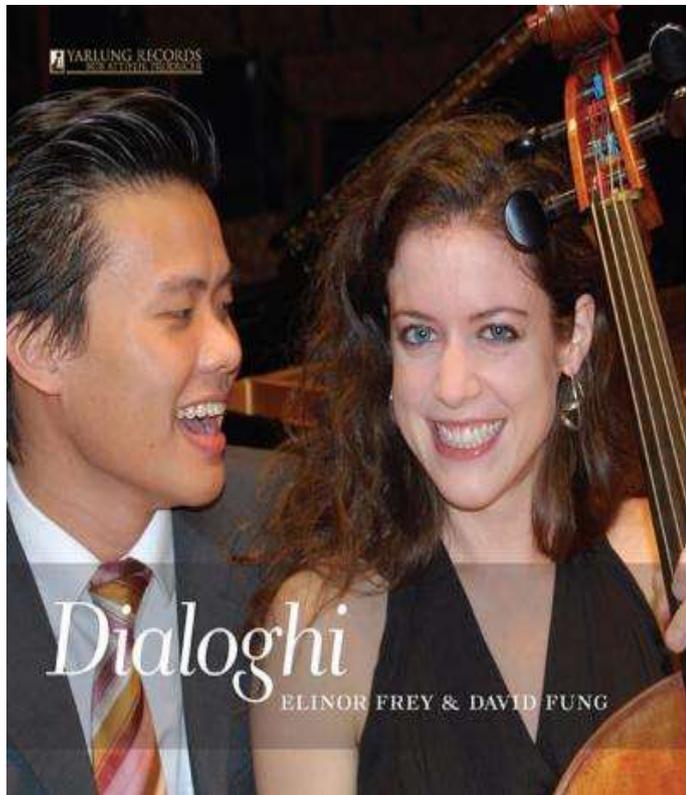


Bob Attiyeh was the recipient of The Los Angeles and Orange County Audio Society 2015 Humanitarian Award in appreciation of the label's outstanding audiophile recordings and the good work Yarlung does to support young musicians in the early stages of their international concert careers.

Attiyeh notes on his website that artists like Yo-Yo Ma and Martha Argerich gained worldwide acclaim through the sale of CDs, LPs, and downloads, and he maintains that a great recording can make all the difference to a young performer's career.

I asked Attiyeh about his views on the relative qualities of CD, vinyl, digital, and tape formats. He replied that he hesitates getting involved in format comparisons since Yarlung does its best to make each format as musically engaging as possible. He considers that all the formats deliver different musical and sonic results. Although Yarlung offers as many formats as it can manage, it has been Yarlung's goal to present its musicians and their music to as many audiences as possible, rather than to try to focus the attention on themselves as engineers and producers.

I can see what he means. I received copies of his recording entitled "Dialoghi" with Elinor Frey playing the cello and David Fung playing the piano on CD, LP (cut at 45RPM) and master tape - all the way from Los Angeles in just a couple of days. This recording, for example, was made possible by support from the Grace Helen Spearman Foundation, the Ralph M. Parsons Foundation and Executive Producer Arian Jansen. All the media versions of the recording sound excellent, but different, as you would expect.



Dialoghi: Elinor Frey, cello and David Fung, piano (album available on vinyl and tape)

The CD has a brightness and intimacy that many will love. In fact, the CD is manufactured in Germany using a Yarlung special alloy and high-resolution virgin polycarbonate. Without doubt, this is one of the finest-sounding CDs I have heard. Of course, for me, being an *analogaholic*, the 45 RPM 180 g vinyl takes the realism and presence in my listening room to new heights, and the tape, which has no compression whatsoever, simply blows me away. The recording itself is really excellent. Attiyeh used an AKG C-24 stereo valve microphone (fitted with an original brass surround CK12 valve) feeding a valve preamp, no mixer and recorded directly onto a modified Studer tape recorder at 15 IPS using Agfa 468 1/4" master tape.

One of his latest recordings is of some fine jazz playing by The Yuko Mabuchi Trio, produced by Randy Bellous. The youthful Yuko's jazz performances on the piano are remarkably mature, as are

her accompanists on the double bass and drums. As with "Dialoghi," the presence of this recording is uncannily real. Once again, valve microphones were used throughout - the AKG C-24, a pair of Schoeps M222s, and a Bock Audio 5Zero7. The output was recorded on a Sonorus ATR12 tape recorder for analog and a Merging Technologies Hapi unit recording DSD256 for digital.



Yuko Mabuchi Trio

All the recordings can be purchased directly from the website at <http://www.yarlungrecords.com/>. The company also distributes its CDs and vinyl through Naxos Global Logistics in Germany for European customers. However, the tapes can only be purchased direct from the US as they are made to order. What is more, the prices for all their recordings are certainly not extortionate - for example, the 15 IPS CCIR equalization master tapes are an extremely reasonable \$200 each.

This is all great news for audio enthusiasts as Yarlung is clearly another source of superb quality recordings. However, the extra bonus is that your purchases are helping to support up-and-coming young musicians.

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