

# 25 Years

*go by quickly when  
you're having a great time...*

PERFORMERS, COMPOSERS,  
PATRONS AND AUDIENCE MEMBERS  
TAKE A BACKWARD GLANCE

Being a participant in Close Encounters performances was a sublime experience for this old actress. It is a rare and happy circumstance to be asked to narrate a piece to music or around music and I was a lucky designate. What joy! The ensemble was pure heaven to listen to and the rehearsals prior to the performance were a secret pleasure I will always remember. These 25 years have flown but with music on the wings of these angels, Close Encounters with paradise, we can only imagine what is to come.



— **Jane Alexander**

This all started with a dream springing from the head of Yehuda Hanani twenty-five years ago. The dream metamorphosed with Yehuda playing an intimate concert with Michele Levin to friends in our living room in Great Barrington. We were off, if not running. Concerts initially were at St. James Church in Great Barrington and the Berkshire Museum in Pittsfield. Before long the concerts were consolidated at St. James with finales each season at Ozawa Hall. It is doubtful the dream could have envisioned a commissioning project or additional venues along the way in Miami, Ft. Lauderdale, Omaha, NYC, Kansas City, Phoenix, and the High Peaks Festival in the Catskills—or this 25th anniversary season. A loyal and growing audience, dedicated board members, perennially generous benefactors and superbly talented musicians all sharing their love of music, brought

together by Yehuda's vision, charm and leadership have made CEWM the institution it has become. The dream is still evolving. Let us all celebrate in this season the achievements of the past twenty-five years.

— **Rick Beinecke**

Like a good chef stimulating the appetite with a special hors d'oeuvre, Yehuda's pre-concert talks are a perfect introduction to the musical feasts which follow. Urbane and insightful, they justify his motto, "Where Music meets Ideas." Or, if I may suggest a motto, "Cordon Bleu for the Mind."

— **R.O. Blechman**

Close Encounters has become an integral part of my life in the Berkshires. Yehuda always weaves together a program of pieces that balance each other wonderfully, and he brings together with his own consummate musicianship individuals of great skill. And as priceless as all this is, especially in the midst of some of the very dark winter months, Yehuda and Hannah work as a team and not only welcome each of us to the concerts, but bring like-minded souls together. Performances provide the framework for determining which weekends I make sure I will be up north. The concerts, Yehuda and Hannah: invaluable assets for the Berkshires. Happy 25th!

— **Deborah Browning**

Your 25th Season of sublime music filling the gorgeous Berkshires with sounds of bliss!!! My heartfelt congratulations to the great Yehuda Hanani and his wonderful compatriots. You bring such beauty to our troubled world. I feel so fortunate to have once entered your magical circle. Blessings upon thee.



— **Richard Chamberlain**

We love Yehuda. He has made all our lives so much better. He's also proved very popular on WAMC's "Classical Music According to Yehuda."

— **Alan Chartock**

Congratulations Yehuda and Associates on 25 Glittering Years. You have brought history, heart, and performance of the highest caliber to our musical world. Many thanks!

— **Neil Chrisman**

Close Encounters is a meeting point for some of the finest musicians I know. With a commitment to diverse repertoire, and Yehuda's particular skill in illuminating engaging themes for audience members from all backgrounds, it offers an experience that goes beyond the immediate impact of each single concert, and encourages listeners to explore the history and context of the greatest chamber music. I have always felt warmly welcomed by CEWM's loyal audience and committed Board, and my involvement with this organization has had the added benefit of giving me the chance to get to know the beautiful Great Barrington area. Here's to another vibrant quarter-century to come!

— **Anthony Devroye**

Listening to Yehuda Hanani's performances and accompanying introductory remarks for the past many years has been an exceptional pleasure for me and my husband. His musical sensitivity, thoughtful programming, remarkable colleagues and collaborators, and his intelligent, carefully researched commentary before each performance have all contributed to a musical experience that is moving, exciting, and informative. Yehuda's warmth and willingness to mingle with the audience following each performance adds to listeners' overall satisfaction with an evening of great music and fellowship.

— **Deborah Felder**

Yehuda and Hannah Hanani are separately and together a great gift to our country. Their brainchild, the CEWM project, which has now spanned a quarter of a century, embodies everything that we mean by the word "culture," presenting the sacred art of music within a broader context in a way all too rare in our world. It has been an immense honor for me to have been able to participate in this noble endeavor. To my adopted brother and sister, Yehuda and Hannah, to the dedicated supporters who have sustained this wonderful initiative, my love and thanks.

— **Eliot Fisk**

I will remain forever grateful to Close Encounters With Music for bringing to life *How Slow the Wind*, a piece I wrote for Dawn Upshaw and CEWM in

2001 and, more importantly, for bringing many other works into the world for the last quarter century and presenting at the highest level the great works of the past. Happy Anniversary and all good wishes for more life-affirming music making!

— **Osvaldo Golijov**

My late smart and music-loving husband and I first encountered CEWM when it came to Scottsdale many years ago. CEWM brought us what was so sorely missing: adventuresome programming with up and coming young artists and scholarly, delightful commentary. I have happily welcomed the groups to my home to practice using my piano. Seeing how hard they work to make it perfect has been a revelation.

— **Linda Hirshman**

Lucky us, your grateful listeners, for 25 years receiving gorgeous music, presented with the Champagne of bubbling, original, elucidating and educating ideas and thoughts. Viva two extraordinary people—the master of the singing cello and historian of music and its surrounding civilizations, and his soul mate, affectionate aficionado, superbly, sensitively intelligent supporter! It is with great pleasure that I am sending this tribute to a great institution and a wonderful couple: Yehuda and Hannah Hanani. Wishing you lots of continued success in bringing off this brilliant idea.

— **Dr. Magda Gabor-Hotchkiss**

It is with great pleasure and nostalgia that I wish Close Encounters a very happy 25th Anniversary. I send warmest greetings for a continued healthy Box Office and many more years of beautiful music accompanied by Yehuda's creative, sensitive and loving explanations of the music in harmony with Hannah's careful architectural planning! I feel like the godmother to the series having given the very first benefit concert to launch Close Encounters with Yehuda 25 years ago. It has been a joy to make music with him and many other wonderful colleagues.

— **Michele Levin**

There are several factors that make the series such a highlight for me: the wonderful musicians with whom I have had the privilege of performing, the beautiful concert venues, the stunning background of the Berkshires, the sophisticated audiences, and the innovative programming. Many thanks for allowing me to be a part of the legacy of this excellent series.

— **Adam Neiman**

Congratulations to Yehuda Hanani and Close Encounters With Music on the 25th anniversary season of presenting outstanding chamber music. I have been privileged to participate in some of them, inspired by Yehuda and the many great musicians I shared the stage with and gratified by the applause and support of so many dedicated and generous music lovers. May you continue for many more years with the same passion for great music making.

— **Walter Ponce**

“Hats Off” to Close Encounters With Music on its Silver Anniversary—for 25 years of enriching the cultural lives of thousands upon thousands of music enthusiasts! It has been a privilege to relish Yehuda’s creative genius for 20 of those years, as an exhilarated audience and Board member, and also as President of CEWM at the very time of its transition from the St. James Church venue into its elegant home at The Mahaiwe where it has become the preeminent presenter of chamber music that it is today. Thank you Yehuda and Hannah—and thanks to all your extraordinary colleagues—for your perpetual gifts. And, oh, all those unforgettable, star-studded performances at Ozawa Hall and Blantyre.

— **Jerome Rosenberg**

I am enormously indebted to Yehuda Hanani and Close Encounters With Music for having commissioned three works from me within a relatively short amount of time. Yehuda and I first met at the Marlboro Festival in 1967. It was my first encounter with an Israeli; and being curious, I asked for a short meeting which turned into a

long walk—the first of many. Decades later in Cincinnati we became reacquainted and have since maintained a close association. Kudos on your 25th anniversary, and for initiating and maintaining such a vibrant organization. Wishing you another 25 years (at least) of euphonic music making.

— **Paul Schoenfield**

When Close Encounters With Music started twenty five years ago, the goal was to provide quality classical music in the off season period. It has since evolved, in my opinion, into one of the best, if not the best, series of classical music concerts in the Berkshires. Its unique combination of quality and Yehuda’s approach of discussing the music of the evening makes it possible to not only enjoy listening to the music, but learn as well. I feel proud to have been associated with CEWM from its beginning.

— **Aso Tavitian**

Heartiest congratulations for your 25th Season of Great Concerts in the Berkshires! It has been my honor and pleasure to participate in several of these events, which give audiences a personal, historical and musical context for the masterpieces. This “look behind the curtain,” delivered in your inimitable style, engages and inspires us all! I am equally inspired by your marvelous High Peaks summer festival, a great musical and educational experience for exceptional students, in the beautiful Catskill Mountains. Wishing you another 25 years of the The Highest Peaks of Artistry!

— **Peter Zazofsky**



## ***Zen Garden Benefit on a Copake, NY mountaintop.***

***Hosts: Stanley Cohen  
and Carrie Chen***