

Monday

It's a rather challenging start to the week as I returned last night from Japan where I was performing at Tokyo's La Folle Journée. I am fighting jetlag but there is no time to rest as today I'm travelling to France to perform at Festival des Musicales in Colmar. I take a train for part of the journey and meet a friend who will drive me the rest of the way. She not only knows Alsace well, and can show me the important sites, but is also closely linked to Ammala, the humanitarian association of which I am ambassador. Ammala supports a displaced nomadic tribe of Tibetans in North India; I will be making a trip to visit these people in this remote part of the world with the head of the association in September.

In the car we listen to France Musique as they are kindly dedicating a programme to me every day this week in celebration of my 50th birthday on Thursday. The first recording they play is one of my oldest, it's a wonderful trip down memory lane. When we arrive in Colmar, I go straight to the conservatoire to practise.

After my intense trip to Japan I need to refresh the Mozart concerto K488 I will be performing with Deutsche Kammerakademie Neuss and French cellist Marc Coppey, my friend and the organiser of Colmar festival.

Tuesday

We start the day with a dress rehearsal in St Matthieu Church in preparation for the concert tonight. Afterwards my friend wishes to show me the beautiful medieval village commune of Eguisheim in Alsace.

I would seldom go sightseeing on the day of a concert but it's worthwhile to find inspiration in different ways. We sample some of the regional specialities, including Flammekueche. It is so good!

We return and I take a siesta before a phone interview for National Classic Radio in Argentina, in relation to my 50th birthday. Then it's concert time. After performing in the first half, it's a pleasure to be in the audience to hear Mozart's Prague Symphony in the second. I never eat before a performance, so along with the musicians I join Marc for a super dinner after the evening concert.

"I am making Brahms a focus of my performances this year. It's important to hear some of his other major works"

Wednesday

I spend a couple of hours practising in St Matthieu Church before going to the Unterlinden Museum to see the Retable d'Issenheim by Grunewald. I have seen this work of art in books – but it is breathtaking and inspiring to have it right in front of me. We return and lunch with the festival people before my 5pm recital, I will play Brahms, Schumann, Poulenc and Chopin. In the evening I go to a concert featuring Augustin Dumay and Marc Coppey, who perform a terrific Brahms programme, including the B major trio and piano quintet. I am making Brahms a focus of my performances this year and am releasing an album of the *Paganini Variations* and *Sonata No 3* this autumn, it's wonderful and important to hear some of his other major works.

Thursday

Today is my 50th birthday! The day begins by receiving a little cake from the kind hotel staff in Colmar, before having breakfast with some friends who have come to join me. We then return home by

car listening to more France Musique on the way back. The Association of Music Critics in Argentina have named me the best Argentine performer for the previous season, which is a nice surprise. My beloved family, my wife Rusiko (also a pianist) and 19-year-old son Adrian, have organised a wonderful surprise party with some of my closest friends, with superb homemade food. We live close to Geneva, it is wonderful to be back home. We continue until late into the night. The phone hasn't stopped ringing all day and my birthday passes by in a flash, so I have little time to think about hitting this round number!

Friday

I spend most of the day watching videos of candidates for Concurso Internacional de Piano de Tucumán. I'm judging the competition, which starts on 25 June and is held in northern Argentina. I am the president of the jury for this second edition and I am keen to be involved in every stage from the very beginning. So I have had many videos to watch, which takes up the whole day.

Saturday

Today I work on my programme for a concert in Riga next week: the Brahms *Piano Concerto No 2 in B flat*, which is a towering piece and needs a lot of work every time I play it. At 6pm I have my yoga lesson, something I started a year ago. I'm still studying the basics, but it's important for me to learn about the spiritual elements and the philosophy behind yoga as well as the physical movements. I see how yoga connects with my work for the Ammala association and my forthcoming trip to India. Discovering this philosophy is really opening up a new world to me.

Sunday

I work more on the Brahms concerto before spending time with my family in the evening. My son is home again, so it's great to all be together at the end of a busy week.

Nelson Goerner will release an album of Brahms solo piano works in October on Alpha Classics.

nelsongoerner.com

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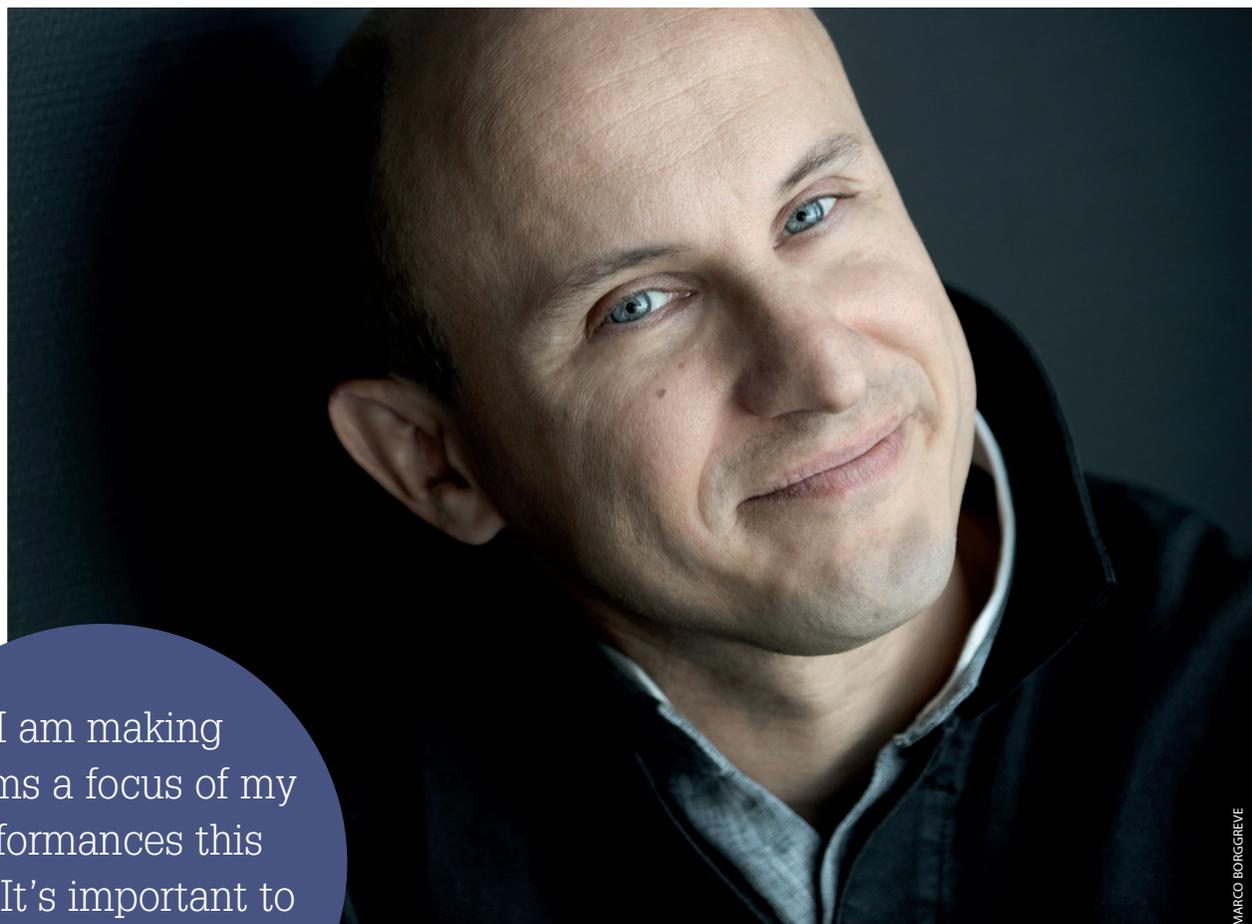


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My Life – a week with Nelson Goerner

