

DWIGHT PELTZER

Pianist, Advocate, Teacher

A Working Performance and Recording Chronology

FIRST RESEARCH EDITION | JULY 11, 2026



PRIVATE-CIRCULATION RESEARCH DOCUMENT

This edition assembles verifiable public records into a single chronology. It is designed to be corrected and expanded with programs, clippings, recordings, and recollections from Dwight Peltzer's personal archive.

What the public record already establishes

Dwight Peltzer's surviving digital footprint understates the scale and character of his career. The record assembled here shows a pianist repeatedly trusted to learn, premiere, record, and advocate for demanding American music, while maintaining a broad classical and Romantic repertory.

13	9+	II	3
exact-date performance records	named premieres or first performances	named composer relationships	commercial recording projects located

The best concise description is composer's pianist: not merely a specialist who played contemporary music, but a musician around whom composers built works and on whom institutions relied to make new scores intelligible.

The strongest documented through-line

- Direct participation in the 1964 Tudorfest at the San Francisco Tape Music Center with David Tudor, Pauline Oliveros, and the center's experimental-music community.
- A sequence of premieres by Loren Rush, Joseph Baber, Arthur Custer, Frederick Tillis, John Watts, Francis Thorne, Elliott Schwartz, and Wesley Fuller.
- Major-platform appearances at Carnegie Recital Hall, Alice Tully Hall, MoMA, the Edinburgh International Festival, Wigmore Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, and with the Boston Symphony Orchestra.
- A performing career integrated with teaching, residencies, lecture-recitals, master classes, and BBC Radio 3 broadcasts.

STATUS OF THIS EDITION This is a verified first edition, not a claim of completeness. Carnegie Hall explicitly notes that some historic performance records remain missing, and much of Peltzer's career survives in undigitized programs, radio logs, university archives, and short-run LP documentation.

METHOD

How to read the chronology

Entries are separated by confidence level so that a dated program is never treated as equivalent to a later recollection. The confidence mark applies to the date-and-program detail, not to the importance of the event.

Mark	Confidence	Meaning
A	Primary	Exact date and substantive program detail from an institutional archive, original program, or first-party record.
B	Confirmed	Event and period are secure, but an exact date, complete program, or direct archival image remains unresolved.
C	Research lead	Credible retrospective, reproduced liner note, or secondary transcription that should be checked against the original archive.

Concerts, recording sessions, broadcasts, and later public-history appearances are identified separately. A recording date is not silently converted into a public-concert date.

VERIFIED APPEARANCES

Exact-date chronology

Date	Venue	Performance record	
March 30, 1964 <i>Concert / recording</i>	San Francisco Tape Music Center, San Francisco	Tudorfest. John Cage's 34'46.776" for two pianists, performed by David Tudor and Dwight Peltzer. The surviving recording was made on this date. The liner essay explains that Peltzer simultaneously played Cage's companion score 31'57.9864".	A
April 3, 1964 <i>Concert / recording</i>	San Francisco Tape Music Center, San Francisco	Tudorfest. Peltzer participated in Cage's Music Walk and played piano in Atlas Eclipticalis with Winter Music, Electronic Version. Both surviving recordings are dated April 3.	A
November 15, 1964 <i>World premiere</i>	Hertz Hall, University of California, Berkeley	First performance of Loren Rush's Hexahedron, written in 1963–64 for Peltzer. The work's open-form structure allowed the pianist to choose a path among contrasting musical events.	C
May 9, 1969 <i>Premiere</i>	Southern Illinois University, Carbondale	Premiere of the First Toccata from Joseph Baber's Three Toccatas, Op. 31. The composer's account places the composition and premiere during Peltzer's 1969 residency at SIU.	B
May 4, 1971, 8:30 PM <i>Solo recital / 2 world premieres</i>	Carnegie Recital Hall, New York	Solo recital: Beethoven's Diabelli Variations, Berg's Piano Sonata, Op. 1, Frederick Tillis's 5 Poems for Piano, Arthur Custer's Parabolas for Viola and Piano, and Variations for Piano. Carnegie Hall records world premieres of the Custer and Tillis works.	A
April 4, 1974 <i>World premiere</i>	Composers Theatre, New York	First performance of Arthur Custer's Found Objects No. 7 for piano and prerecorded tape. Custer wrote the work for Peltzer and incorporated Peltzer's own piano sounds into the tape component.	C
September 26, 1975, 8:00 PM <i>Concert / New York premiere</i>	MoMA Summergarden, New York	All-John Watts program with Peltzer, trumpeter Robert Levy, and Watts on ARP synthesizer. The program included Piano for Te Tutti (New York premiere) and Sonata for Piano, alongside electronic and tape works.	A
September 27, 1975, 8:00 PM <i>Concert</i>	MoMA Summergarden, New York	Second presentation of the John Watts program described above. MoMA noted that Peltzer had already given more than 40 performances of Watts's Piano Sonata.	A

Date	Venue	Performance record	
July 23, 1976, 8:00 PM <i>Solo recital</i>	MoMA Summergarden, New York	Composers Theatre recital of contemporary piano music by Aaron Copland, Raoul Pleskow, Alvin Brehm, Francis Thorne, Eugene Kurtz, and John Watts.	A
July 24, 1976, 8:00 PM <i>Solo recital</i>	MoMA Summergarden, New York	Second presentation of the contemporary-American recital described above.	A
April 18, 1980 <i>Orchestral soloist</i>	Symphony Hall, Boston	Donald Martino's Piano Concerto with Seiji Ozawa and the Boston Symphony Orchestra. The BSO's performance-history query records Peltzer as soloist; period reviews identify the Martino concerto.	B
April 19, 1980 <i>Orchestral soloist</i>	Symphony Hall, Boston	Second documented Boston Symphony performance of Martino's Piano Concerto under Ozawa.	B
April 22, 1980 <i>Orchestral soloist</i>	Symphony Hall, Boston	Third documented Boston Symphony performance of Martino's Piano Concerto under Ozawa.	B

Carnegie Hall finding: one Carnegie Hall event has been directly confirmed in the currently accessible linked-data record—May 4, 1971. No second Carnegie Hall event has yet been located. That should not be treated as proof that none occurred, because Carnegie Hall notes that historical records remain incomplete.

Confirmed appearances with dates still unresolved

Spring 1969 <i>Southern Illinois University, Carbondale</i>	Peltzer accompanied soprano Marla Waterman in songs by Joseph Baber. The composer later recalled that the collaboration continued for decades.	C
1969 <i>University of Chicago</i>	Tour performance of Baber's First Toccata. Exact date and full program have not yet been located.	C
1969 <i>University of Massachusetts, Amherst</i>	Tour performance of Baber's First Toccata. Baber states that this Amherst concert led to Peltzer's appointment as professor of piano.	C
May 1975 <i>Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center, New York</i>	Featured soloist with the Composers Festival Orchestra during Composers Theatre's Sixth Annual May Festival. Exact date and work remain to be recovered.	B
1976 <i>New York, venue unresolved</i>	New York premiere of Francis Thorne's Piano Sonata. A later album note says Peltzer subsequently toured the work in the United States and Europe.	C
1977 <i>Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Minnesota</i>	Premiere of Elliott Schwartz's Chamber Concerto III: Another View, with Peltzer as piano soloist and William McGlaughlin conducting.	B
Before the 1978–79 academic year <i>Edinburgh International Festival</i>	Solo recital in which Peltzer premiered new pieces written for him. The works and exact date remain unidentified in the accessible source.	B
1978–79 <i>Wigmore Hall, London</i>	Piano recital presented by the United States–United Kingdom Educational Commission during Peltzer's Fulbright-Hays year.	B
1978–79 <i>Queen Elizabeth Hall, London</i>	Shared concert of American music with pianist Cecil Lytle, also presented by the Educational Commission.	B
1978–79 <i>Universities across the United Kingdom</i>	Lecture-recitals and piano master classes devoted to American music and complex 20th-century repertoire.	B
1978–79 <i>BBC Radio 3</i>	Recorded lecture-recitals and interviews on American music. A contemporary biography also says additional American-music programs were planned, including a Samuel Barber 70th-birthday program.	B

Early July 1979 <i>Keele University / Buckingham Palace invitation</i>	Recital for HRH Princess Margaret, Chancellor of Keele University, with Peltzer's wife, soprano Marla Waterman, and Peter Dickinson. Peltzer recalled playing a Scott Joplin rag at the Princess's request.	B
1978–79 <i>Cheltenham Festival</i>	Festival appearance listed in Peltzer's 1981 Folkways biography. Exact date and program remain to be confirmed.	B
1980 <i>University of California, San Diego</i>	First performance of Wesley Fuller's <i>Time Into Pieces</i> for piano and computer, a work written for Peltzer at the Colgate University Electronic Music Studio.	B

PREMIERES AND FIRST PERFORMANCES

A repertoire built through trust

The premiere record is the clearest evidence of Peltzer's standing among composers. These were not occasional novelties added to conventional programs; many works were written for him, dedicated to him, or repeatedly carried by him on tour.

Year	Composer	Work	Record
1964	Loren Rush	<i>Hexahedron</i>	First performance; written for Peltzer.
1969	Joseph Baber	<i>First Toccata, from Three Toccatas, Op. 31</i>	Premiere; the full set was written for Peltzer.
1971	Arthur Custer	<i>Parabolas for Viola and Piano</i>	World premiere at Carnegie Recital Hall.
1971	Frederick Tillis	<i>5 Poems for Piano</i>	World premiere at Carnegie Recital Hall.
1974	Arthur Custer	<i>Found Objects No. 7</i>	First performance; written for Peltzer and using his recorded piano sounds.
1975	John Watts	<i>Piano for Te Tutti</i>	New York premiere at MoMA Summergarden.
1976	Francis Thorne	<i>Piano Sonata</i>	New York premiere; later toured in the United States and Europe.
1977	Elliott Schwartz	<i>Chamber Concerto III: Another View</i>	Premiere with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra.
1980	Wesley Fuller	<i>Time Into Pieces</i>	First performance at UC San Diego; written for Peltzer.

The Edinburgh International Festival recital adds unnamed premieres beyond these nine. Until the original festival program is recovered, they are intentionally not counted in the named total.

DISCOGRAPHY

Recording legacy located so far

1964 / 2014 **Music from the Tudorfest: San Francisco Tape Music Center, 1964**

New World Records 80762 (3 CDs)

Peltzer appears in Cage's 34'46.776" for two pianists, Music Walk, and Atlas Eclipticalis with Winter Music. The performances were recorded in March and April 1964 and first issued in this archival set in 2014.

Release date unresolved **The Contemporary Piano Project, Vol. III**

Serenus SRS 12071

Solo works by Francis Thorne, Loren Rush, and Arthur Custer: Piano Sonata, Hexahedron, and Found Objects No. 7. The surviving back-cover transcription documents several premiere and touring details.

1980 **Henry Cowell's Complete Works for Violin and Piano**

Folkways FW37450 / FSS 37450

With violinist David Sackson. Recorded at CUE Recordings in New York City in 1980. The album includes Cowell's Suite, Hymn and Fuguing Tune No. 16, and Violin Sonata.

Two contemporary sources also state that Peltzer recorded piano and chamber works for Serenus and Vox. Those references establish a broader discography, but the full titles and catalog numbers have not yet been reliably reconstructed.

CRITICAL RECORD

Press and reception

The most important review cluster surrounds the April 1980 Boston Symphony performances of Donald Martino's Piano Concerto. A preserved tear sheet titled "Measure for Measure: at long last, Martino" praised Peltzer's skill and conviction. The Christian Science Monitor followed on May 7, 1980, with "Boston Symphony: a strong season ahead," treating Peltzer as a committed advocate for the concerto.

A 1981 Folkways biography summarized earlier critical reception with the phrase "dazzling technique and profound insight." The original critic and publication are not identified in the liner notes, so the quotation is retained as a period attribution rather than a fully resolved review citation.

The musician that emerges

1. A composer's pianist

Composers repeatedly entrusted Peltzer with scores that had no established performing tradition. The relationship extended beyond technical execution: works were written for him, his sounds were embedded in tape parts, and he carried pieces through repeated performances and tours.

2. A bridge between experimental and concert traditions

The same career includes Cage at the San Francisco Tape Music Center, Beethoven's Diabelli Variations at Carnegie Recital Hall, Scott Joplin for Princess Margaret, and a Boston Symphony concerto under Ozawa. The usual label "new-music pianist" is accurate but incomplete.

3. An advocate, not a one-night specialist

MoMA reported more than 40 performances of John Watts's Piano Sonata by 1975. Baber and Thorne likewise describe works moving from premiere into Peltzer's touring repertory.

4. A teacher whose pedagogy grew from live musical problems

Teaching posts, residencies, master classes, and lecture-recitals ran alongside the performance career. His Fulbright year joined analytical teaching, performance, broadcast, and direct work with composers rather than separating scholarship from the stage.

5. An unusually valuable oral historian

The public archive is thin precisely where his direct memory is likely strongest: programs, composer relationships, rehearsal stories, institutional politics, and how difficult new works were made teachable. A structured oral-history interview could recover material no database contains.

What would make the catalogue genuinely complete

The remaining work is less about broad web searching than about targeted archive requests and Dwight's own files. The following sequence would produce the highest return.

I	Personal archive session — Photograph or scan recital programs, appointment books, contracts, review clippings, LP test pressings, correspondence with composers, and BBC or orchestral paperwork. A single two-hour session could resolve more than weeks of open-web research.
2	Boston Symphony Archives — Request the April 1980 program book, complete concert dates, commissioning/premiere status, and any audio or rehearsal documentation for Martino's Piano Concerto.
3	BBC Written Archives and Radio 3 — Identify Peltzer's 1978–80 lecture-recitals, interviews, and planned Samuel Barber broadcast; request transmission dates, scripts, and surviving audio.
4	Edinburgh, Cheltenham, Wigmore, and Southbank archives — Recover exact dates, programs, commissioned works, reviews, and presenters for the Fulbright-era British appearances.
5	University archives — Search Southern Illinois, UMass Amherst, University of Chicago, UC Berkeley, UC San Diego, and Keele for concert calendars, faculty recital tapes, and artist-residency files.
6	Composers Theatre / Serenus / Vox — Reconstruct the Contemporary Piano Project series, full discography, premiere dates, and the John Watts concerto that was announced for Peltzer.

ORAL-HISTORY PROMPTS

Questions worth asking Dwight

- Which composer most changed the way you learned to hear musical structure?
- What did David Tudor teach you—explicitly or simply by working beside you—during Tudorfest?
- Which premiere required the greatest act of faith before the piece began to make musical sense?
- What happened in rehearsal with Ozawa, Martino, and the Boston Symphony that the reviews could not capture?
- Which works written for you deserve to be performed again now?
- What do your students receive from the performing career that could not have come from pedagogy alone?

Sources and live archive links

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<https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc2146024/>
15. Steinway Artist profile — artist since 1980
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16. Dwight Peltzer and Leonard Lehrman in conversation, March 4, 2024
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=avuFZhweej4>
17. Northeastern University repository — Martino review tear sheet
https://repository.library.northeastern.edu/downloads/neu%3Ams396h37j?datastream_id=content
18. Christian Science Monitor — “Boston Symphony: a strong season ahead,” May 7, 1980
<https://www.csmonitor.com/1980/0507/050705.html>

EDITORIAL NOTE

This chronology favors traceability over false precision. Corrections should preserve the source, confidence level, and distinction among a public concert, a broadcast, a recording session, and a later recollection.