

VIDEO

TikTok star Alma Deutscher is a classical music hit

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Technology

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Enough with the dissonance of the modern age, the teenager said. And let [TikTok](#) do the talking.

A 17-year-old British classical music composer who has rejected “ugly” modern music in favour of the “beautiful melodies” of the past has become a hit on the very modern TikTok social media platform.

[Alma Deutscher](#) was raised in Surrey but moved to Vienna with her family where she now studies at the city’s university.



Alma Deutscher made her debut at Carnegie Hall in New York in 2019. She had written a violin concerto by the age of ten

She has been frowned upon by the musical elite for her rejection of “[atonal](#)” contemporary classical music in favour of unfashionable melody.

The teenager has begun to attract enormous social media audiences, with one video of her conducting a small [Viennese choir](#) attracting nearly a million views within hours of it being posted.

Deutscher said the size of her audience on TikTok, which is primarily used by those under 30, showed that classical music could attract new listeners, if it was easier to listen to.

“The essence of music is melody and if you take that away there is nothing,” she said. “People who push noise down the throats of audiences and pass that off as music that only very educated people can understand, these are the people killing classical music.”

Deutscher, who in her 2019 acceptance speech for the European Culture Prize said she hoped a “more tolerant age is dawning when melody and beauty will once again be permitted”, admits that her musical influences do not extend much into the 20th century.

While there is Mahler, Mozart and Beethoven there is no Stravinsky, whose influential *Rite of Spring* in 1913 brought experiments in dissonance to the forefront of the classical music world. “It is extremely easy to create ugliness,” Deutscher said. “That needs absolutely no talent. But to create beauty? That is a challenge. And I don’t want to inflict misery on my audience or myself. This fanatical, ideological idea that anything that has a hint of melody is old fashioned and that anything that is not “noise” is derivative, is nonsense. People say that music has to reflect the ugliness of the modern world. But you can take the ugliness of the world and through music turn it into something beautiful and you can see it has such a strong effect on people.”

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While producers of classical music events such as the BBC Proms, and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra have made huge strides in attracting younger audiences, there is still a perception among younger generations that classical is a “stuffy, rule-ridden” world.

Deutscher said it had been a “dream” to reach young people and show them that classical music “has the best tunes and harmonies”.

The composer, who started playing the piano aged two and by ten had premiered a violin concerto and an opera, said she was pleased she could not now be called a “child prodigy”. “I was furious when I was called that,” she said. “But I am too old now.”

Not too old for TikTok though.