



# Dr. Alexander Stein

Founder & Managing  
Principal - Dolus Advisors



## **How does your background as a pianist overlap with your work as a consultant?**

Training in classical piano from a young age instilled a cluster of skills I draw on in my work every day: intense focus and concentration, attention to detail, high standard of excellence, poise under pressure, patience, comfort in complexity and abstraction, critical thinking, appreciation for collaboration, love of learning, being taught, and incorporating criticism, and I especially credit studying Bach and Shostakovich fugues with my fluency in deconstructing and creatively solving complicated problems. But more than anything else, music is a language of symbolic inference—the communication of meaning in sound; and I trace my ability to discern logic in the inscrutableness of human thought to that early grounding in listening for emotion and signification in a sound world without words.

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**#afterarts**

## What role does music currently play in your life?

My life has always revolved around listening to and playing music. My wife is a playwright and our life together and with our children has been filled with all the arts—theatre, concerts, dance, books, poetry, museums. But after a long period away from the piano, membership in After Arts has brought me back into a community of musicians—which I've missed and love—and revitalized my re-engagement with practicing old repertoire, playing chamber music again, and even a return performance in Carnegie Hall. I could not be happier!

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## **Do you feel that your study of music has contributed to any neuroses?**

Am I the first After Arts member to be asked this? That's definitely just a coincidence. Right? Ha! But seriously, it's a very interesting question. Neuroticism, simply put, is chronic maladaptive choice-making leading to distress not fulfillment. Anyone can have a healthy or unhealthy relationship with something they love or have chosen to pursue. Music study could be driven by many factors and needs—obedience, approval, anger, attention, rivalry—separate from talent, passion, or ambition. For me personally, music served many functions when I was a child and teenager, but it was a salvation and more an antidote to neurosis than a contributor.

# What are you listening to right now?

I'm a voracious and omnivorous music lover and listener. My taste is eclectic: Josquin, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Bach, Rachmaninov, Bruckner, Scarlatti, Piazzola; solo instrumental, chamber, symphonies, oratorios. I also listen to a lot of jazz. Amidst all the variety, I continually return to Mozart Piano Concerti and Beethoven String Quartets, and I can listen to Bach 28 hours a day, 9 days a week, and both Art of Fugue and the Goldberg Variations are what I'd want, far in the future, as the last music in my ears at the end of my life.



My life always revolved around playing music. But after a long period away from the piano, After Arts has brought me back into a community of musicians—which I've missed and love—and revitalized my making music, and even a return performance in Carnegie Hall.

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