

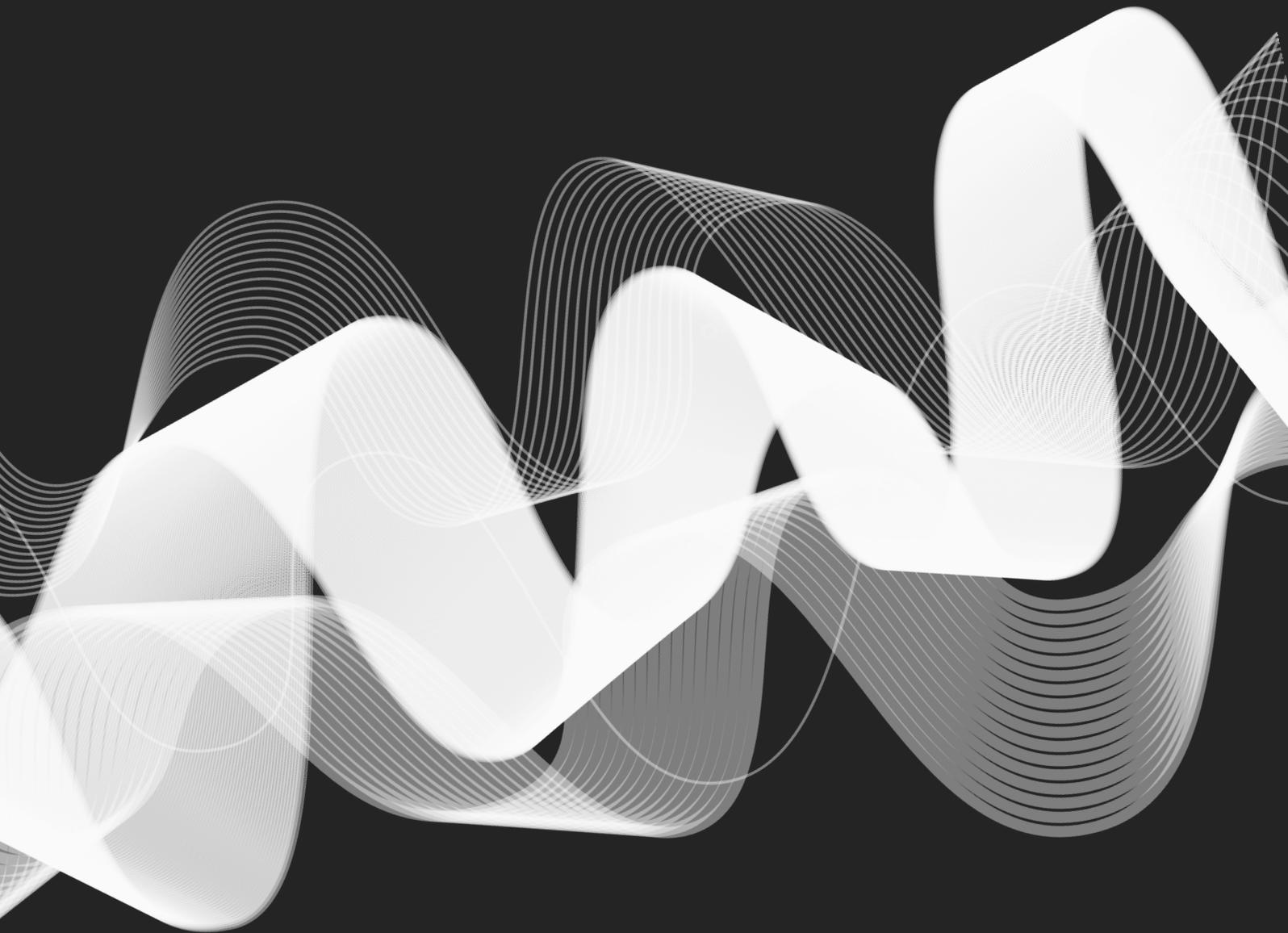
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FIRST
INVERSION

Recording for First Inversion

a guide for artists, composers and producers

2025



ABOUT THE FIRST INVERSION LABELS

TIMELINE:

- 1992 The Divine Art label was founded in England in 1992
- 1994 The Diversions label was launched The Divine Art Recordings Group was solidified
- 2005: DARG acquired Athene Records
- 2005: DARG launched Historic Sound vintage recordings label
- 2007: DARG acquired Métier Records
- 2008: DARG acquired Dunelm Records
- 2008: DARG acquired Heritage Media
- 2009: DARG opened our office in the USA
- 2013: DARG head office relocated to the Compass Music & Arts Center
- 2013: Global distribution (CD and digital) with Naxos Global Entities
- 2019: DARG acquired Brandon Music Publishing
- 2019: DARG Celebrated its 500th release!
- 2023: 30th anniversary, the head office moves back to the UK and the start of our joint venture collaboration with Mill Media
- 2024: Sub-distribution of Ekkozone and the 700th title
- 2024: First Inversion Acquires the Divine Art Recordings Group
- 2025: First Inversion Acquires Ekkozone

OUR CORE ACTIVE LABELS



divine art

Our 'flagship' imprint representing our core artists devoted to new developments of standard and contemporary repertoire.



métier

One of the world's most respected labels for new music including the challenging and avant-garde.



athene

Devoted to recordings of early music and period instruments.



diversions

Our "launch point" imprint. Bringing newer artists and composers to the First Inversion family and the global



EKKOZONE

The most cutting-edge contemporary works from around the world.

RECORDING FOR FIRST INVERSION

A brief overview

[note: when we refer to 'artist' we include composer, executive producer... whoever will be our client in any particular project]

We do not operate our own studio but work with top engineers and producers in many countries. Making the recording (including editing) is the artists' responsibility but we will recommend engineers if possible, and work with them and you during the recording process. In particular we are delighted to work in partnership with Mill Media (near Manchester, England) who can offer a range of top quality audio and video production services.

We offer several options for production and distribution, with different bases for cost, ownership, royalty rights and other terms; for artists who wish to retain full ownership of the recording and manufactured product, we offer an Agency contract. In this contract, we design, produce, manufacture, distribute and promote the recording on your behalf but you retain ownership of the entire production subject to appointing us sole sales agents for a ten year (renewable) term at a reasonable commission. We then present your album through our worldwide CD and digital distribution network and manage all the legal and administrative work and expense taken care of and a very valuable international PR service.

The second basis is the traditional contract: here we take an assignment of the recording ownership (reversible if the company ceases business) and produce the CD/digital release; depending on the options chosen, we will supply as part of the package a quantity of CDs and/or digital audio cards and/or agree a royalty on sales. We can also agree a ten-year license (rather than transfer of ownership) at a premium fee.

This brochure contains summaries of the contracts and options available, but you can ask us for further details or explanations. Remember that in all cases our package assumes delivery of acceptable audio masters. Though we are an 'artist-led' company we do have very high production standards and are not interested in vanity publishing.

The first step is to complete and send a Recording Proposal on the Web or PDF form supplied. This is required! Then we can offer a firm estimate based on your preferences and specifications, for example whether normal CD jewel case is selected or whether you would want a digipak or other special packaging. We'd also then submit a formal draft contract for you to check out and approve.

Please note: contracts are binding legal documents. We try to make them clear and easy to read but you should ask for clarification of any point which is not straightforward. You may of course take independent professional advice as well.

REVIEWS AND RECENT AWARDS

The Divine website displays reviews (in full) for each album in our catalog.

- 68th (2026) GRAMMY® Award nominee - Best Choral Performance *
- 2026 JUNO Awards nominee - Classical Album of the Year (Solo Artist) ****
- International Classical Music Awards - Instrumental and Chamber Works Nominee - 2025*
- 2025 Contemporary Music "Coup de Cœur" from the Académie Charles Cros (France) **
- *New York Times* Best Classical Album of 2025 **
- *American Record Guide* 2025 Critic's Choice *
- *Textura* Best of 2025 (2x) **
- *W Kulturalny Sposób* (Poland) Best Classical Albums of 2025 **
- *BBC Music Magazine* 2025 Vocal Choice ****
- Gramophone Award - Orchestra of the Year - Czech Philharmonic - 2024†
- Gramophone Best Albums of 2024 ** & 2025 ****
- BBC Albums of the Year 2024 **
- Best Album of 2024 - Opern Welt *
- International Classical Music Awards - Instrumental and Chamber Works Nominee - 2025*
- P2 Bedste 2024 *** (Danish Award for Best Albums of the Year)*
- Royal Philharmonic Society Awards - Young Artist Winner - Lotte Betts-Dean**
- German Record Critics' Award (Preis der detuschen Schallplattenkritik) Nominee - Lieder and Vocal Recital - 2023*
- Stage Awards - Digital Project of the Year Nominee - 2023 **
- Music & Stars Award - Gold Medal Winner - 2023*
- Opus Klassik Award Nominee - Instrumentalist of the Year/Solo Instrumental/Innovative Listening Experience - 2023*
- Pizzicato (Luxembourg) Supersonic Award ** & * - 2023 & 2025
- Opus Klassik Award Nominee - Solo Instrumental Recording of the Year - 2022*

† portfolio inclusion in nomination *Divine Art **Métier ***Ekkozone ****Athene

OUR TEAM

Executive / Managing director:

David Weuste (Texas, USA)

Project Manager/Engineer:

James Cardell-Oliver (Manchester, England)

Promotion and Marketing:

Margaret Skeet (London, England)

Sean Dacy (Texas, USA)

Promotion and Data Management:

Sean Dacy (Texas, USA)

OUR COMPANY

First Inversion, LLC

Registered Office: 728 S. Saginaw Blvd,
Saginaw, TX 76179

Mailing Address: 1617 Park Place Ste
110-FI, Ave, Fort Worth, TX 76110
+1 682233 4978

Divine Art Limited

Registered Office: 176/178 Pontefract
Road, Cudworth, S72 8BE

+44 161 818 2477 (production office)

DISTRIBUTION

DIGITAL DISTRIBUTION

Global Digital Distribution through Naxos Music Group

Retailers include Naxos Music Library, Apple Music, iTunes, Spotify, YouTube Music, Amazon Music, Pandora, TikTok, Meta, Deezer, Shazam, Tidal, Qobuz, Highresaudio.com, HDTracks, iHeart Radio, Slacker, Tencent, 7digital, ArkivMusic, Presto Music, Idagio, Pro Studio Masters, and over 100 more.

PHYSICAL DISTRIBUTION

AUSTRALIA

EOS Music

BELGIUM, NETHERLANDS, LUXEMBOURG

Bertus Groothandel en Distributie B.V.

CHINA (PRC)

Naxos China

DENMARK/FINLAND/SWEDEN/ NORWAY

Naxos Sweden

FRANCE

DistrArt

GERMANY & AUSTRIA

Naxos Deutschland

GREECE

Musical Offering

HONG KONG

Naxos International Far East Ltd

HUNGARY

MEVex (General Trade and Service Ltd.)

ITALY

Milano Dischi S.r.l

JAPAN

Naxos Japan Inc.

MALTA

D'Amato Bros

NEW ZEALAND

Ode Records

POLAND

CMD

SPAIN

Polo Digital

SOUTH KOREA

Aulos Media

SWITZERLAND

Musikvertrieb ag

TURKEY

A.K. Müzik Yapım

UNITED KINGDOM & IRELAND

Naxos Music UK

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA/CANADA/ MEXICO

Naxos of America

GLOBAL PARTNER

Naxos Deutschland

Able to ship to retailers in all countries without dedicated distributors

SUMMARY OF MAJOR TERMS

1. Our service (all contracts)

Includes:

- Initial Press Release to all major UK, EU, US outlets
- Full CD and digital album booklet/package design service
- Coordinated design, full color booklet and CD label, no shoddy or cheap packaging.
- Obtaining mechanical copyright licenses (EU, USA and others) and pay all mechanical royalties due
- Allocating barcode and International Standard Recording Codes
- Arranging pressing of CD/SACD/DVD, printing of booklets and inlays, and packaging of product
- Preparing separate digital album booklet and iTunes booklet
- Providing initial stock to artist (no handling charge)
- Distributing review and promotional copies to the press
- Supplying stock to distributors worldwide
- Storing stock and provide further copies to artist (subject to shipping/handling charge)
- Placing digital (SD and HD) version on iTunes, Amazon, Apple Music, Qobuz, Idagio, Spotify and many more
- Promoting recording on Divine Art website, Amazon (worldwide) and other online platforms.
- Uploading sample track/extract and promo video to YouTube
- Regular social media posts and media follow-up
- Paid advertisements in selected music journals and social accounts
- Artist profile page at divineartrecords.com

Optional at extra cost:

- Commission program notes
- Commission or acquire artwork
- Promotional video production
- Obtain translation of notes & texts
- Locating/recommending producer/engineer/venue
- Assisting with editing audio
- Preparing production master, encoding ISRC and CD Text data
- Additional advertising and promotional work
- Provision of digital audio cards for concert sales and promotional use

Please note we include in our packages promotional and marketing work valued at around \$5000 if purchased from an outside agency.

Note: all references in this guide to 'CD' include where relevant SACD, DVD, Blu-Ray and Vinyl – all physical media formats.

2. Advertising and promotion

Our PR team will send out press releases; send out promotional copies (either CD or digital); work with our distributors; manage our social media channels and aim to secure feature articles and interviews. The marketing campaign will be set up to maximize effectiveness for each project concentrating on social media and online promotion but (selectively) also paid advertising in traditional musical publications. We can also arrange bespoke advertising and other promotional opportunities at cost to be agreed. We also offer the opportunity to take part in a split cost editorial interview and advertisement package with Fanfare magazine.

Our team also handles distribution, retailer and digital streaming platform B2B marketing for prime placement of recordings in both brick and mortar and digital storefronts as well as editorial playlists for streaming.

3. Other options

All costs will be made clear and agreed before we proceed, subject to certain variables. However this does not prevent changes to the requirements later. Of course, if you think we can help you in any other way, please ask! We are your partners and want to do all that we reasonably can to get your recording published. Please note that we do not act as management agents, or get involved in arranging live performances. Neither do we offer a free unlimited PR service.

4. Costs and specifics

On submission of your Proposal we will send you a contract and detailed costs quotation.

AGENCY contract (example only)

- Ownership of recording stays with you – licensed to us for 10 years.
- You own finished CDs but appoint us sole worldwide sales agents.
- We pay you all net sales proceeds of CDs less a sales commission of £1..50/\$2/€2 + 20%.
- We pay 50% of digital income (= approx. 70% net income; no deduction of general overheads).
- We provide agreed initial quantity of CDs, and press enough to satisfy trade demand.
- Options regarding cost of mechanical royalty due to composer or publisher.
- Further CDs supplied to you: we charge a handling fee of 50% cost.
- Re-pressing: range of options offered.
- Digital Audio Cards available within package or as an extra.

TRADITIONAL contract: (example only)

- Transfer of recording ownership.
- Initial batch of CDs included; further CDs available to buy at special artist price'
- We carry all cost of promotional work and mailings all costs of further printing/manufacture.
- We pay royalty of 15% net income from all Sales (physical, digital, streaming) for a fixed period of 10 years from month of release (waiver of royalty available for £200 discount.)

ALL contracts:

- We control sync and licensing and pay 50% of any income from licensing.
- You provide (usually) program notes, biographies, photos for the booklet and any other data and items we need and you can suggest cover art design.

WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU (SUMMARY)

First stages:

1. Completed Recording Proposal – so we can prepare a contract
2. Signed contract – the project is now live!
3. Team meeting for information for preliminary press release and scheduling discussions

Audio

1. 24-bit 44.1kHz HD audio minimum wave file set. Higher resolution preferred (many sellers, including Apple, now require 96K minimum)
(if audio supplied is not ADM certified we will make an Apple Digital Master at a fee of £100/\$150/€150)
- 2 DDP CD master (or SACD/DVD equivalent where appropriate) - we can make this if need be
3. High resolution DSD/DXD/Dolby Atmos/multichannel audio preferred where possible
4. subject to approval of recording/performing quality and musical worth

Booklet

1. Program notes on music/composers
2. Artist biographies and photos
3. Suggested cover art design (optional) – all artwork is merged into our corporate general design, For 'series' recordings we will provide the design
4. Details of credits for engineers, sponsors (and sponsor logos), recording dates, and music publishers
5. For all texts to be printed make sure you have the author's / publisher's consent in writing
NOTE: Make biographies interesting – not just long 'bragging lists' of collaborators, teachers and venues.
Photos should be high quality. Booklets over 36 pages will be printed on thinner, lower quality paper

Support Requirements

1. Promotional video for social media and online
2. Regular updates on your concert dates:
3. Engage in active social media promotion
5. Important: for all titles you must set up an Artist Profile on Spotify and Apple and other platforms. Matching existing profiles is key. If you already have a profile, please send us the ID or link so we can ensure matching upon submission. If an artist or composer does not have any previous recordings, a new profile will automatically be created upon album release.
7. We recommend obtaining a PPL Performer ID to be eligible for broadcast and public performance royalty.

OTHER SERVICES

Usually, musicians make their own arrangements for choosing a recording location, engineers and producers, and we get involved when the master recording is nearly finished. But through our partnership with Mill Media in the UK, we are able to offer these services as needed, or as offered for in-house recordings.

We can arrange or help to arrange booklet notes (and translations). Of course we charge a reasonable fee for such work. We normally insist on managing the booklet design but again this is always done with the full involvement of the performers. In most cases, the artist/composer will provide full program notes.

SUB-DISTRIBUTION

For independent producers, ensembles or artists who wish to create their own imprint within the First Inversion catalog, we are happy to discuss a sub-distribution agreement which is outlined on the next page.

TIMESCALES

We always have a busy schedule of releases planned, so please do not expect us to take a new project on and arrange a full commercial release in a very short time – of course we will do all we can to help, but we can only release and effectively promote so many titles per month. We do not usually release in December.

Our distributors require finished stock, completed audio masters and artwork, submission of all metadata at least twelve weeks prior to the release date, so as a general guide, we are usually “fully booked” for releases for at least four months ahead.

QUALITY CONTROL

We have very high standards, so we do have certain rules. The performance and music must be of the highest quality, so as to protect our reputation with the trade and especially the music press, it must also fit our brand goals and guidelines for each label. This also applies to the recording and editing, so where we do not oversee this, any contract is subject to our approval of the master recording. **We require high definition (24-bit 44K minimum for restorations and remasters and 96k for new recordings) audio and a CD quality DDP master. DSD/multichannel/Dolby Atmos preferred.** But we can help with many of these matters. Also if masters are not supplied to ADM (Apple) specification we will obtain a certified ADM master at a small additional fee.

DETAILS

- Ownership of recording stays with you
- All design, design files, development, mastering, and audio development to be done by you and provided in time for delivery to our distribution networks and their deadlines in order to meet your release date goals.
- Digital Retailer Pitch developments handled by you and your team beyond initial distribution pitching
- PR and promotion to be handled by you beyond our team facilitating digital download & physical promos
- You own all finished CDs but appoint First Inversion/Divine Art as sole worldwide sales agents.
- We pay you all net sales proceeds of CDs less a sales commission of £2/\$3/€3 + 30%.
- We pay 50% of digital income (= approx. 70% net income; no deduction of general overheads) and licensing.
- We provide agreed quantity of CDs to satisfy trade demand through our manufacturing facilities.
- Reporting and handling of mechanical royalties due to composer or publisher, cost borne by you.
- Further CDs supplied to you: we charge a handling fee of 50% cost.
- Re-pressing: range of options offered.
- Digital Audio Cards available within package or as an extra.
- Initial setup and manufacturing costs are assessed based on manufacturing amounts
- All design, audio, and package contents must meet our in-house standards and follow in-house and platform guidelines
- All logos and branding will be your own

FAQ

Q. What is a digital audio card?

A. A credit-card lookalike which contains a single use download code so the holder can download the album. Designed to match the CD cover. Used for live venue sales.
(See page 10)

Q. I am in the UK. Do I have to pay VAT on top of the fees?

A. Yes unfortunately VAT applies to all contracts made with UK residents. Note that import VAT has to be paid (UK) for delivery of CDs from our main warehouse – we've included a credit for that in your quotation. Some fees charged to EU residents may be zero-rated

Q. People say that CDs are almost obsolete – can I have a digital-only album?

A. Yes but we believe strongly that real collectors will want CDs for years to come and our policy is always to have a physical format. Digital albums still require all of the work and expense apart from printing. We can discuss options.

Q. How many CDs do you actually have made?

A. The first print will cover your initial copies, and around 100-200 for distribution and promotional use – then we round up to reduce unit cost. So if you want 200 (the usual requirement) we make 500. If you want only 10 then we'd make perhaps 150; any quantity less than 500 is made by short-run process and carries a higher cost per CD to make. Short-run orders are generally pressed on CD-R discs. Modern technology has made it so that these are no longer inferior in quality to manufactured or Redbook CD discs. However, many markets do not accept them and sales may suffer. This is a developing situation.

Q. I want a vinyl album. Is that possible?

A. Yes, this is a growing market space, and one we are beginning to issue. We can quote if of interest.

Q. What about SACD and surround sound recordings?

A. Again – they are more expensive to produce. We can quote for SACD, Blu-ray audio and other formats.

Q. How can I help to promote my album?

A. We will discuss all the options, plans, and more in our initial team meetings. We want you part of the entire process.

Digital Audio Cards

Opportunities for more concert sales. Simple, convenient and cost-effective promotional give-aways

For any artist or composer with a recording on one of our labels¹ the digital audio card is becoming a very valuable promotional and sales tool. Hand to concert promoters, agents and so on instead of a CD – the cards are light, convenient and easy to carry in bulk.

Concert audiences who don't collect CDs and might not follow up a great event by buying a digital album from iTunes or Amazon... catch them when they are hot with an audio card you can sell for about £10/\$12/€11 (or any price you like)...They get a single use link to download the album together with the digital PDF album booklet. A perfect way to maximize your concert sales and give your audience choice. IMPORTANT: The card/link is active for TWO YEARS and then expires. Bear this in mind when ordering and planning....

The card is just like a credit card made of tough plastic, with a code allowing the holder to download the album from a special bespoke site. Below are some examples:



For any card the minimum order is 100. The cost per card including set-up, design, production and copyright clearances is £4.00 (or euro/dollar equivalent) plus any applicable tax. ²

To order, just write to sales@divineartrecords.com stating catalog number/title of the relevant album, and quantity of cards needed, and we'll take it from there: or if you have any questions CONTACT US.

YOUR NEXT STEP

If you are interested in working with us and wish to become a "Divine Artist" please complete and send to us the Recording Proposal Form sent with this document – if we have not supplied one, we can post it to you or send it by email – or it can be downloaded from the website (See back page). Please also enclose a brief CV and any other information you consider relevant.

Also tell us about your proposed concerts or broadcasts. If you already have a master recording, tell us but please do not send it until we ask.

If we like your proposal, we will work out the cost of the job, after we have discussed the details. Options such as extra advertising and promotional work can be discussed and priced as appropriate. We try to make the process as easy as possible even though we can't often meet potential recording artists personally o discuss proposals. But we will regularly work with you by email, zoom and telephone.

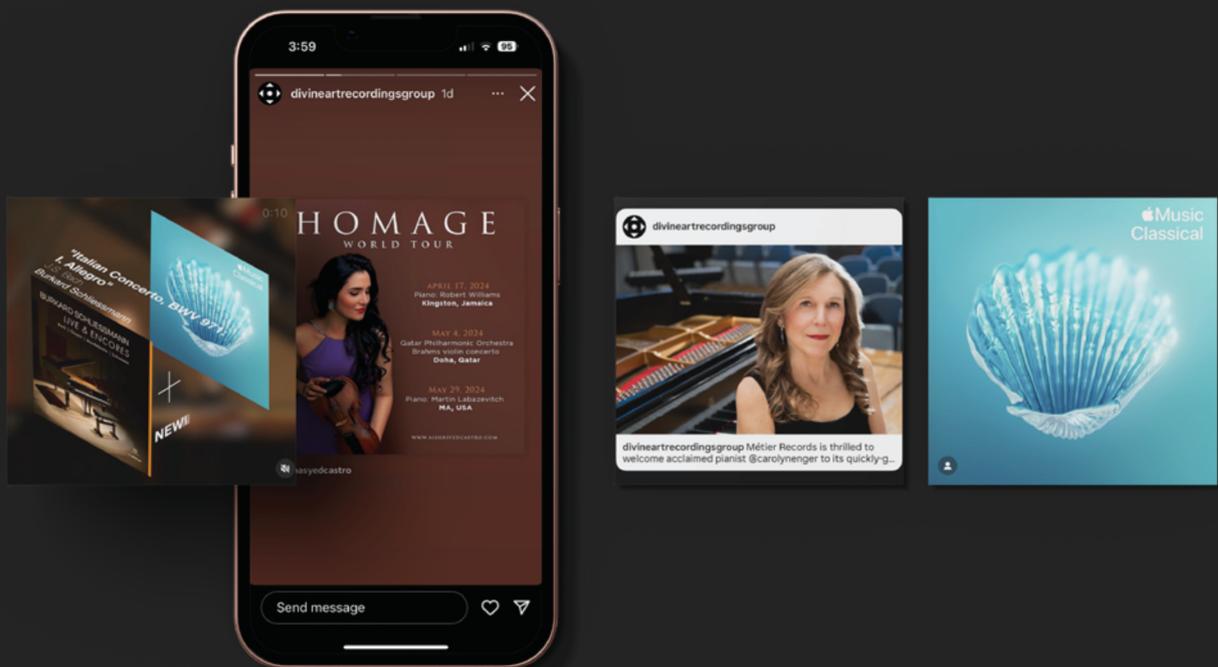
Email to: office@first-inversion.com

APPENDIX

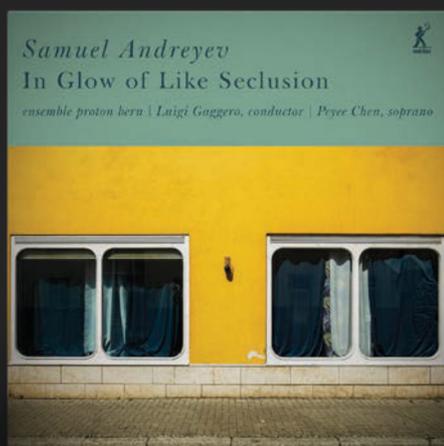
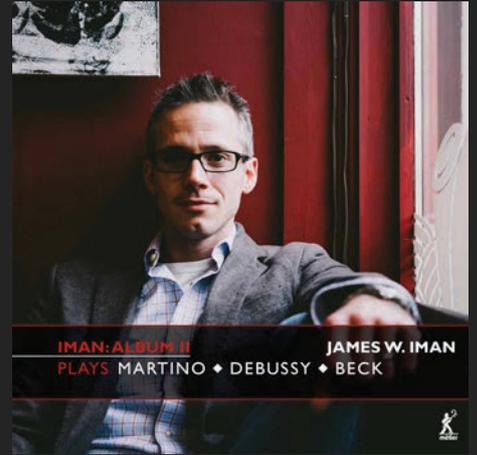
Examples of advertising placed in BBC Music, Gramophone and Fanfare



Advertising content is also placed in online and in print at Fanfare, MusicWeb International and on social media



ARTWORK EXAMPLES



Double Audiophile Vinyl

Example Digipak packaging

THIS BROCHURE IS ISSUED BY:

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Fort Worth, TX USA 76110

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Email: office@first-inversion.com
Company Site: first-inversion.com
Storefront and Labels: divineartrecords.com

