

Texas Public Radio reporter Jack Morgan interviewed Classical Music Comedy Duo Igudesman and Joo [here](#) about their ARTS SA performance on Tuesday, October 21 at the Aztec Theatre. Call (210) 226-2891 or buy tickets [here](#).

## **Igudesman And Joo: In Theater Of The Absurd, Beautifully Blended Music Reigns Supreme**

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### **BY [JACK MORGAN](#)**

There is a two-man act coming to San Antonio, an act unlike anything you've seen. I was able to track them down by phone in Cincinnati, and I have to admit, it was hilarious. (*Editor's note: listening to this story will convey much more than just reading it*).

It seemed an easy enough question when I asked it. "Tell me — what is it that you all do." And yes, there it was, that first little burst of something that indicated this interview would not be quite the norm. "Ha-ha...what is it that we all do?"

Alexsey Igudesman wasn't being cagey. He and stage partner Hyung-ki Joo are very accomplished musicians, but what they do, on the surface at least, is exceptionally odd. They take up all kinds of music, a little bit of Roberta Flack's soul, a dash of Tchaikovsky, a dollop of a Gloria Gaynor anthem, and you get the picture, and mix them up.

It should be a musical muddle. What it becomes, though, is an eccentric, exhilarating mélange that meshes perfectly with their stage show —one part high-end musicianship, and one part slapstick performance art. Igudesman explains it this way. "We are musicians. We are very passionate musicians. But we don't like categorization. We also love mixing it up with theater and comedy."

Partner Hyung-ki Joo echoes his thoughts. "Let's not downgrade us to just classical musicians. We embrace all types of music." Joo also hits on a recurring theme with the duo. "All music comes from the same place. And the problem with the whole stigma of being a classical musician is that many of them are very high brow and take themselves so seriously. And they look down on other types of music."

There's not any real danger that Igudesman and Joo take themselves too seriously. All you need do to know that is listen to their music (*see YouTube excerpts below*). "We love touring and bringing our shows (to different places), including San Antonio on Oct. 21," says Igudesman.

They will be playing at the Aztec Theater downtown, a venue where every seat has an up close view of their zany antics. As to what they call this show, here's Igudesman. "It's a show called A Little Nightmare Music. And it should be fun."

I ask them for their backstory — how did they get to where they are. Igudesman fills me in. "I was born in Russia, but I met Hyung-Ki Joo in the Yehudi Menuhin School in England, which was a very specialized school for talented weirdos, basically."

It's essentially a boarding school for gifted musicians, and that's where they first hatched the idea of combining high and low brow humor and music. Igudesman says that in the years since, YouTube has been very, very good to them. "We have over 40 million hits and you can see a lot of what we do on YouTube."

Joo says that in his experience, there are just a couple of things that make all the difference, anywhere in the world. "The two things that keep people going are music and comedy."

A big fan of laughter myself, I tell him it would take just one hand to list the things I like better than laughing. Joo laughs enthusiastically at that. "Laughter is good for you, no question. So is kale." And the man with a clearly natural sense of timing isn't done yet. "And probably, while eating kale, you shouldn't laugh because you might choke. I guess the moral of the story is don't laugh while eating kale."

So there you have it. Don't laugh while eating kale. Any other time is fair game.

The San Antonio show is their two-person act, but they sometimes work with symphonies. Joo would be happy to do so here in the Alamo City. "We would love to do something with the San Antonio Symphony! Please... we would love to come to San Antonio," he says. And then there's the clincher. "Also, it's a lot warmer down here." That it is.

More details on their show [here](#).