

PRESS KIT

# THAT PÄRT FEELING

- The Universe of Arvo Pärt -



Production Company:  
PAUL HEGEMAN PRODUCTIONS

ADDRESS: Ereprijsweg 2, 1861 XL Bergen  
(nh), The Netherlands

PHONE: +31652322818  
EMAIL: [info@paulhegeman.nl](mailto:info@paulhegeman.nl)

WEBSITE: [www.paulhegeman.nl](http://www.paulhegeman.nl)

OFFICIAL FILM WEBSITE:  
<https://thatpartfeeling.com/>

OFFICIAL FACEBOOK:  
<https://www.facebook.com/thatpartfeelingfilm/>

TRAILER: <https://vimeo.com/305041285>

## LOGLINE

The great composer Arvo Pärt at work, whilst the artists who perform his music and are inspired by it illustrate the different aspects of the phenomenon the man is.

## SYNOPSIS

Arvo Pärt, the most celebrated living composer of our time, is considered to be something of a recluse. However, at work he appears to be the total opposite, combining an incredible sensitivity with humour and energy. His intense collaboration with the Cello Octet Amsterdam forms the heart of this documentary which sheds a bright light on Pärt's universe. A universe not only inhabited by classical musicians like Tõnu Kaljuste, Candida Thompson or Daniel Reuss, but also by choreographers such as Jiří Kylián, filmmakers including Alain Gomis and young techno musicians like Kara-Lis Coverdale. They are all searching for *that Pärt feeling*.

## CREDITS

<b>Director:</b>	Paul Hegeman
<b>Camera:</b>	Paul Hegeman, Auke Dijkstra
<b>Sound:</b>	Wouter Veldhuis, Raphael Bourdon, Stephan Kos
<b>Editing:</b>	Caitlin Hulscher
<b>Sound Design:</b>	Jaim Sahuleka
<b>Color Grading:</b>	Joel Sahuleka
<b>Producer:</b>	Paul Hegeman for PAUL HEGEMAN PRODUCTIONS
<b>With:</b>	Arvo Pärt, Tõnu Kaljuste, Jiří Kylián, The Cello Octet Amsterdam, Kara-Lis Coverdale, Candida Thompson, Alain Gomis, Daniel Reuss, and others.
<b>Country of production:</b>	The Netherlands (2018)
<b>Duration:</b>	75'
<b>Format:</b>	HD
<b>Aspect Ratio:</b>	1.1:85
<b>Audio:</b>	Stereo Dolby Digital 5.1

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Ever since I started making films, I was struck by the music of Arvo Pärt. From the ECM release of his first CD on, Pärt's music has been a constant companion in my life. Through the years Pärt has become the most performed composer of our times. Something that surprised me, I must admit, because how can such ostensibly sober music become so popular. Beyond that popularity, what struck me even more, was that his music had such a big impact in the world.

The Guardian recently declared Pärt's music the most soothing in the world, meaning that people nowadays don't choose Bach or Albinoni for their funeral, but Pärt. Patients on palliative care refer to his music as *angel music*, that takes the anguish of the nearing death away.

When I speak to someone about his music, the reaction is never neutral. Hearing the name Arvo Pärt, they immediately stop what they are doing and tell me what a profound impact his music had on them. An anecdote may follow about how it changed their life, how it confronted them with certain aspects of it or how it helped them to overcome particular challenges.



I was also fascinated by his music because of the peculiar mix of polyphonic music from the 16th century, minimal music and influences from the Russian Orthodox Church. So I wanted to find out who this man was, and what the mystery was that surrounded him.

If you look for instance at the way he constantly is portrayed, you will see him as a hermit or a monk. I wondered if he was actually like this. That is how I came up with the idea of making this documentary. I wanted to lift the veil of the mystery that surrounds Arvo Pärt. For this very reason the working title for this documentary was *'The Mystery of Arvo Pärt'*.

I watched the available interviews with him in which he constantly came across as a closed man who muttered because he was not able to fully formulate his sentences, even shutting off completely at times. That is when I realised that the only way for me to find out who he really was, was to film him in natural surroundings at work with musicians. I hoped that in this way his true self would be revealed.

The Cello Octet Amsterdam were to record his works *Summa* and *Solfeggio*, and when they asked Pärt for permission for this, he not only rewrote both compositions for eight cellos, but also came to Amsterdam to rehearse with them. I was very lucky to film those few days, during which he indeed revealed himself to be the opposite of the stereotype image given to him. He appeared to be a dynamic but also highly sensitive man. Grounded, he nevertheless despises the everyday fashion of this world. But he is definitely not the monk that people consider him to be, he is rather a warm and social man. That is why the rehearsals with the Octet form the backbone of the documentary.

Next to that, I filmed performances by musicians who know his music through and through and who are able to explain the different aspects which make his music so outstanding. We hear a very rich collection of his music in the film; from the melodic *Summa*, the tempestuous *Third Symphony* to the far more gentle sounds of *The Deer's Cry* and *Für Alina*. *Tabula Rasa* seems to embrace all the different typical Pärt elements.

The designated person to shed a light on Pärt and his music is Tõnu Kaljuste, who is not only his befriended neighbour in Estonia, but also one of the most important conductors of his music. His role in the film is mainly that of a biographer. But he also talks about Pärt's spirituality. Without this he would never have been able to compose his impressive body of work. But as the different people in the documentary also emphasize, his spirituality is not something that only reaches towards the sky. It is very much rooted in the ground. You can hear the struggle with life, and the sadness that sometimes underlines it. Therefore it is not amazing that he wrote a composition for the victims of the terrorist attacks in Madrid, and that he has a special bond with visual artists like Anish Kapoor and Gerhard Richter. One thing is for sure: he is not the recluse that so many people take him for. On the contrary, he is very much at the centre of the world.

At the same time, I was very intrigued to notice that Pärt's music has so often been used for soundtracks of films, from arthouse to Hollywood. It seems that his music can be laid over any kind of image. For this aspect I approached French filmmaker Alain Gomis, who in his film *Félicité* does not use Pärt's music merely as a soundtrack but also as a part of the intrigue of the film. He lets the Congolese Orchestre Symphonique Kimbanguiste de Kinshasa perform Pärt's compositions in a very touching and unusual way. 'Arvo Pärt digested by the Congo' provides the ultimate proof of the universal character of his music.

It's not only in film, but also in the world of dance that Pärt's music finds its place. *That Pärt Feeling* shows a ballet by the famous choreographer Jiří Kylián, who also talks about the many things that he, as former citizen of a communist country, has in common with Pärt, who also lived under Soviet oppression.

But Pärt is not only inspiring choreographers, he is also a great example for modern pop artists like Nick Cave or Thom Yorke. So I was very lucky to find Kara-Lis Coverdale, an extraordinary Canadian artist with Estonian roots, who herself makes electronic music, but who encompasses Pärt's music in her work. According to her, Pärt's music has been something that she can always go back to, like a basic form of inspiration.

Finally, I wanted to show the influence of his music on the new generation of students, and that is why I filmed a workshop given by the musicologist and pianist Ralph van Raat at the Conservatory of Amsterdam. Van Raat, who knows Pärt personally and has several times recorded him, is convinced that the new generation is extremely drawn to playing Pärt.

What all these people have in common, is that they are all driven by the search for *that Pärt feeling*.

## ABOUT ARVO PÄRT



Today Arvo Pärt needs hardly any introduction. But this was very different before his first recording on ECM in 1984 with *Tabula Rasa*. Though he might never have obtained this much of a success, had Manfred Eicher not heard by chance *Summa* on a local radio station and immediately decided to record it. This was the beginning of a long friendship between the two.

Born in Estonia in 1935, in a small town called Paide, Pärt knew from early on that his life would be devoted to music. Although his first compositions were of a neoclassical style, he soon started experimenting with modern techniques. But this modern approach was not appreciated by the Soviet regime. A very difficult relationship with the Soviets would follow, but it shows the strength and determination of Pärt's character that he continued to compose the music he believed in. What made things even complicated, is that he adhered the Russian Orthodox Church in a time when religion was oppressed. An existential crisis at the end of the '60s led to a period of self reflection and reinvention that lasted no less than eight years. When he finally was ready to show the world his new style, he came with something revolutionary. He called his new music *tintinnabuli*, or as he puts it in his own words: "I work with very few elements – with one voice, with two voices. I build with the most primitive materials – with the triad, with one specific tonality. The three notes of the triad are like bells. And that is why I call it tintinnabulation". Since then he has written many world famous works like *Miserere* (1990), *Te Deum* (1993), *Litany* (1995), *Kanon Pokajanen* (1997), *Passio* (1998), *Lamentate* (2005), and *Adam's Lament* (2012). His music is played all over the world, and its impact is undeniable. What is so beautiful about Pärt's music is that it combines a sensitivity, spirituality and earthiness that reflect the character of this humble and spiritual man.

## ABOUT THE DIRECTOR



The various activities performed by Paul Hegeman are nearly all supplied by a great passion for cinema. This was the case during his French and Philosophy study and was the topic for his master thesis in which he explored the relationship between Film and Surrealism. After having worked for a few years as a French teacher, he turned his passion into his occupation and has now already made hundreds of films/programs for among others like the VPRO, NPS, VARA, AVRO, NCRV and Arte. In addition, he worked for more than 25 years as a journalist and in particular for Elsevier, HP/De Tijd and the VPRO Gids in which he wrote a weekly article about cinema in all its facets.

Recurring themes in his work are a strong involvement in social matters – he made films about the Spectacle Society, pollution, asylum seekers, immigrants and gambling addiction -, love for the African continent and music in the broadest sense of the word. In fact, his most remarkable films rest on these three pillars. In *Spirit, show and songs* (IKON, 1994) he explores the relationship between music and spirituality with Leonard Cohen as guide. Youssou N'Dour also plays an important role explaining how music and spirituality in Africa are tied together. *Mali Blues* (NPS/Arte, 2002) is a documentary about the triumph of a musical culture in one of the poorest countries in the world. *The heroes are back home* (VPRO, 1999), a documentary about the Cuban music of then and now, displays in an almost identical way how culture and music come face to face with each other. The more recent *New life in Congo* (2012), a documentary about mother-child relationship in East-Congo, shows where music became silent due to excessive violence. *Live to be a hundred* (2012) about the conductor and harpsichordist Ton Koopman, in a way builds on the many music specials he made in the 1990s for VPRO's Loladamusica, that vary from portraits of the ECM label, Bill Laswell, Peter Hammill, Can and the sound of Dakar, to the Cuban tradition and the legacy of Stockhausen. In 1996 he founded a film theatre, Cinebergen, in his hometown Bergen, of which he is still the artistic director and programmer.

## FILMOGRAPHY

2018 That Pärt Feeling - The Universe of Arvo Pärt  
2013 New Life in Congo  
2012 Live To Be a Hundred - A Year in the Life of Ton Koopman  
2009 Images of Experience and Inspiration  
2006 Portrait of a Compulsive Gambler (NCRV)  
2006 Nits Urk  
2006 The Ironing Room  
2005 Give and Take  
2004 Jackie Leven Live: The Meeting of Remarkable Men  
2003 If a Bird Without Wings  
2002 Mali Blues (NPS/Arte)  
2000 Caruso (VPRO)  
1999 The Heroes are Back Home (VPRO)  
1998 Hits and Bytes (VPRO)  
1998 Sons of.... (VPRO)  
1994-1998 Loladamusica (VPRO)  
1994 Spirit, Show and Songs (IKON)  
1992 Movie Review (VARA)  
1992 Dizzy Goes East (NBC/WDR/A2)  
1991 Perestroika Behind a Gas Mask (AVRO)  
1991 Glowing Darkness (AVRO)  
1990 The Music of West Africa (VARA)  
1990 Culture and Resistance (VARA)

## THE MAIN CHARACTERS



*"He's the warmest and nicest person I know."*

**Tõnu Kaljuste** is an Estonian conductor who is credited with keeping alive the choral tradition of his home country under the Soviet regime. After Estonia gained its independence, he became its musical ambassador. He gained an international reputation with Arvo Pärt's ECM recordings and he continues to record music composed by his neighbour and friend. He performs everywhere around the world and in 2014 he won a Grammy in the category 'Best Choral Performance' for Pärt's composition *Adam's Lament*.



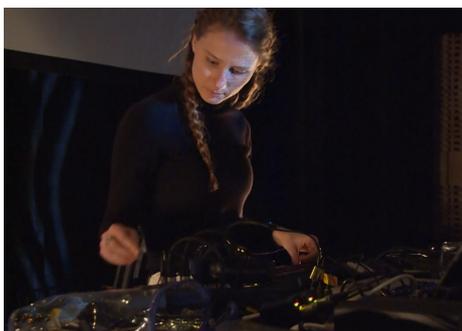
*"He reminds me of a tree. His roots are firmly rooted in the ground, but his branches are green and his blossoms are beautiful."*

**Jiří Kylián** is a Czech born, Netherlands based, world renowned choreographer. He was awarded the highest honour of entering the French Académie des Beaux-Arts in 2018. Kylián is a great admirer of the music of Arvo Pärt, and wrote the ballet *Whereabouts Unknown* ('93) inspired by his composition *Fratres*. This ballet can be seen in the documentary.



*"The music has a true identity. It makes you look at something in a certain way, but it does not depict what you see."*

**Alain Gomis** is an award winning French filmmaker and screenwriter. His feature film *Félicité* won the Silver Bear at the Berlin Film Festival in 2017. In this film, he uses Pärt's music not just as a soundtrack, but also as a central character. By letting the Orchestre Kimbanguiste de Kinshasa perform several of Pärt's pieces, he shows the universal power of this music.



*"It's elemental, in terms of music. Three notes. But it somehow sounds so full, you really don't need anything else."*

**Kara-Lis Coverdale** is a Canadian techno music composer, producer and musicologist with Estonian roots. She began studying the piano at the age of five and writing her own music when she was ten. From the age of thirteen she started to play as a church organist and it's there that she came in contact with Pärt's music. Although her work is of a completely different genre, Pärt's influence is highly noticeable in her compositions.



*“There is something in his music and in his being that resonates universally with people.”*

The **Cello Octet Amsterdam** is a cello ensemble based in Amsterdam. They have performed more than seventy world premieres, with most of these written or rewritten especially for them. The Octet have worked not only with Arvo Pärt, with whom they have a special working relationship, but also with Sofia Gubaidulina, Pierre Boulez, Philip Glass and Theo Loevendie. They perform all over the world and released a CD in 2017 with the music of Arvo Pärt, for which they recorded *Summa*, *Solfeggio* and other works.



*“You take the dampers off the strings, and then when you play something so simple, you hear everything become brighter.”*

**Ralph van Raat** is a Dutch pianist and musicologist. He recently made his Carnegie Hall debut where he performed music by Debussy and Boulez. Van Raat knows Pärt personally and has had the pleasure to work with him on one of his recitals. Although he has a very busy schedule as a pianist, he nevertheless finds time to teach at the Conservatory of Amsterdam. We see his workshop on Arvo Pärt in the documentary.



*“You are listening to this music and you are lifted up somewhere there.”*

**Candida Thompson** is an English violin player and conductor of the **Amsterdam Sinfonietta**, although she prefers to refer to herself as the artistic leader. With the Sinfonietta, she has worked with the likes of Murray Perahia, Gidon Kremer and Ludovico Einaudi. She has performed many of Pärt’s compositions and feels a strong connection to his music.



*“On the inside, he is still that little boy from Rakvere who can be as happy as a child. And he has this very naughty boyish humor.”*

**Daniel Reuss** is a Dutch choir conductor with an international reputation. He has worked with different choirs in Germany, Switzerland and Estonia, but he is currently the artistic leader and conductor of the **Cappella Amsterdam**. They have received international acclaim for their CD *Kanon Pokajanen*, one of Pärt’s most known choral pieces. Their latest repertoire includes works by Brahms, Josquin des Prez and György Kurtág.

Also with: **Raoul Boesten, The Chamber Choir Kwintessens, Marcel Mandos, The North Netherlands Orchestra, New European Ensemble, The Students of the Conservatory of Amsterdam and The Hague, Cora Bos-Kroese, Aurélie Cayla, Yvan Dubreuil and Valentina Scaglia.**

## MUSIC IN THE FILM

*Solfeggio*  
Cello Octet Amsterdam

*Tabula Rasa*  
Amsterdam Sinfonietta

*Da pacem Domine*  
Chamber Choir Kwintessens / New European  
Ensemble conducted by Raoul Boesten

*Symphony No. 3*  
The North Netherlands Symphony Orchestra  
conducted by Tõnu Kaljuste

*Summa*  
Cello Octet Amsterdam

*Fratres*  
The North Netherlands Symphony Orchestra  
conducted by Tõnu Kaljuste

*Fratres*  
New European Ensemble

*Fratres*  
Orchestre Symphonique Kimbanguiste de  
Kinshasa

*Kanon Pokajanen*  
Cappella Amsterdam conducted by Daniel  
Reuss

*The Deer's Cry*  
Chamber Choir Kwintessens conducted by  
Raoul Boesten

*Trivium*  
Kara-Lis Coverdale

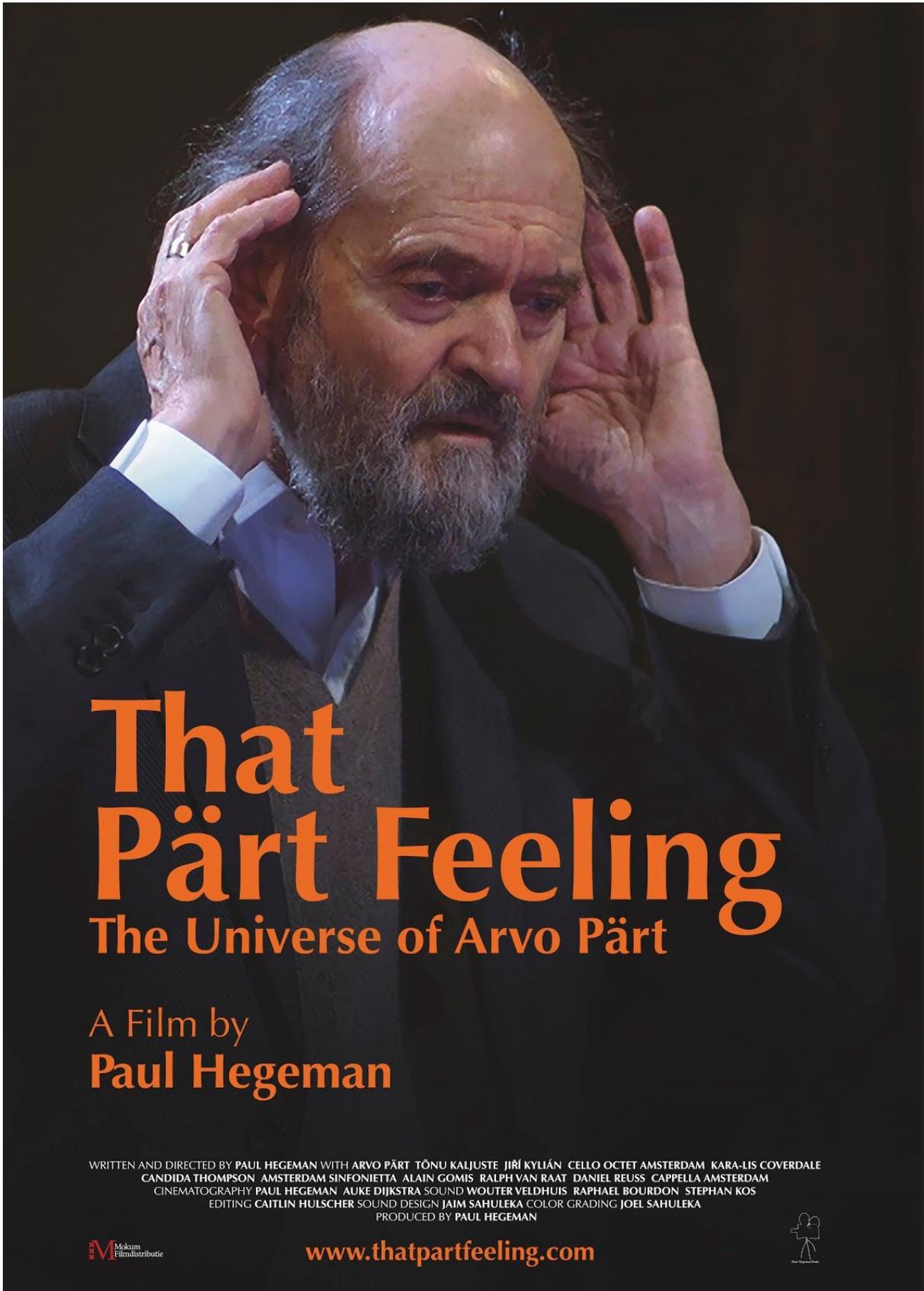
*Für Alina*  
Lennart Triesschijn

*La Sindone*  
The North Netherlands Symphony Orchestra  
conducted by Tõnu Kaljuste

*Antiphonen*  
Orchestre Symphonique Kimbanguiste de  
Kinshasa

*My Heart's in the Highlands*  
Orchestre Symphonique Kimbanguiste de Kinshasa





# That Pärt Feeling

## The Universe of Arvo Pärt

A Film by  
**Paul Hegeman**

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY PAUL HEGEMAN WITH ARVO PÄRT TÖNU KALJUSTE JIŘÍ KYLIÁN CELLO OCTET AMSTERDAM KARA-LIS COVERDALE  
CANDIDA THOMPSON AMSTERDAM SINFONIETTA ALAIN GOMIS RALPH VAN RAAT DANIEL REUSS CAPPELLA AMSTERDAM  
CINEMATOGRAPHY PAUL HEGEMAN AUKE DIJKSTRA SOUND WOUTER VELDHIJS RAPHAEL BOURDON STEPHAN KOS  
EDITING CAITLIN HULSCHER SOUND DESIGN JAIM SAHULEKA COLOR GRADING JOEL SAHULEKA  
PRODUCED BY PAUL HEGEMAN

 Mokum  
Film Distributie

[www.thatpartfeeling.com](http://www.thatpartfeeling.com)

