

Žibuoklė Martinaitytė

Biographical Notes

“Virtuosity and a convincingly alluring rhetoric in her music are synthesized with intuitivism and existential pathos. As this fresh and unusual blend of characteristics is rarely found in the arts, it is no surprise that Martinaitytė’s music is rapidly captivating the attention of international audiences... (Jūratė Katinaitė “Attention! High Tension!” VivaVoce magazine, N.80, Frühling 2008)

Composer Žibuoklė Martinaitytė is primarily active in chamber and orchestral music genres. She favors unconventional blends of timbres, expressive virtuosity, intense utilization of extreme instrumental registers, which often stretch the maximum boundaries and technical capabilities of performers. In her scores exceptional roles are typically given to such instruments as tuba, trombone, accordion or bassoon. The composer extracts these instruments from the utmost ends of the orchestra and transforms them into a limelight of indispensable notability.

Her musical life was launched at a special school for musically gifted children called J.Naujalis Gymnasium of Music in Kaunas, Lithuania, focusing on piano. She began to compose music at the age of 13 and turned to study composition at the age 15 writing her first orchestral piece at 18. Martinaitytė studied composition at the Lithuanian Music Academy (BM, MA) with Bronius Kutavičius and Julius Juzeliūnas. Constantly attempting to broaden her horizons and advancing her compositional technique after completing formal studies, Martinaitytė has been taking part in various composition workshops and courses in Europe. She attended the Darmstadt New Music Summer Courses, Centre Acanthes/Ircam, Royaumont, The 6th International Academy for New Composition and Audio Art, Stavanger studying with Brian Ferneyhough, Bogusław Schaeffer, Magnus Lindberg, Tristan Murail and Jonathan Harvey. In 2001 she was granted her first creative residency at Künstlerhaus Lukas der Stiftung Kulturfonds, Germany.

As opportunities began to take on an international demand, she relocated first to San Francisco, CA and later to New York City where she can more easily move between continents and develop activities in a larger creative community. Since moving to the USA, she was commissioned by MATA festival on their 10th anniversary premiering her piece *Polarities* by The Knights Chamber Orchestra and received the "Other Minds" Composer Fellowship (San Francisco, CA) for the spring of 2011. She was granted a number of creative residencies at The MacDowell Colony for Artists in New Hampshire (2009, 2011), The Aaron Copland House (2010), The Millay Colony for Artists (2012) and Wildacres, NC (2014). Other awards include "Look & Listen" Composers Competition Prize (NYC) for the piece *Driving Force* and a commission from Barlow Endowment (2013).

Martinaitytė’s instrumental techniques are exemplified by pieces such as – *Salto Mortale* (1993) for 2 contrabasses and organ, *A Desert* (1996) for 3 trombones, tuba, piano and bell. Later in the piece *Between* for trombone, trumpet and percussion performed in France in 2000 by members of Nouvel Ensemble Moderne de Montreal and in *Attention!*

High Tension! (2001) for tuba and piano which received more than 50 performances throughout Lithuania. Starting from 2004 as a result of her collaboration with Lithuanian accordionist Raimondas Sviackevičius, the accordion has played a significant role in her music for the next few years. In 2004 “Gaida” contemporary music festival in Lithuania commissioned her to write *Driving Force* for trombone, tenor saxophone and accordion. In 2006 she was commissioned to write a concerto for accordion and chamber orchestra called *Breakthrough* performed by R. Sviackevičius and The Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra (Published by Karthause-Schmülling, Germany). This led to an even more interesting event where conductor Daniel Gazon (Belgium) proposed a commission to write a piece for 6 accordions, 5 saxophones, wind orchestra, percussion, piano and strings called *Perpetual Pulsing Transience* (performed in Brussels, Belgium by the Orchestra of Royal Conservatory of Mons and published by Musikproduktion Höflich, Germany).

In addition to writing for acoustic instruments, Martinaitytė has been developing an interest in electronic music. Since 1998 when she composed the piece *Being without* for cello, percussion and live electronics, she has been returning to this expanded palette. Her chamber opera based on Hermann Hesse’s *Steppenwolf* composed from 1995-2003 also uses an electronic tape part accompanying the chamber orchestra and singers. Combining her love for brass instruments with an electronic medium, she created a piece called *Ab Initio* (2004) for tuba and tape which consisted entirely of bird sounds. Among her other electronic pieces performed at the electronic music festival “Jauna Muzika” in Lithuania are *The Unknown* (2005) for soprano, flute, live electronics and tape, *Illusions of Time and Space* (2006) for string quartet and electronics and *Continuity-Discontinuity (11:11-11:22)* (2008) for 4 bassoons and tape.

Her music has been performed throughout Europe, The USA and Asia by Nouvel Ensemble Moderne (Canada), The Smith Quartet (UK), ERGO Ensemble (Canada), The Orchestra of Mons Royal Conservatoire (Belgium), The Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra, The Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra and others. Her work for symphony orchestra *A Thousand Doors To The World* (2009) commissioned by the Lithuanian Radio on the occasion of "Vilnius – Culture Capital of Europe 2009" was broadcast by Euroradio – one of the “largest virtual concert halls” with 4 million listeners. Two of her orchestral pieces - *A Thousand Doors To The World* and *Horizons* received the Lithuanian Composers Union Award as Best Orchestral Performance for 2009 and 2013.