

## Vito Žuraj

Composer

### BIOGRAPHY

Powerful and meticulously crafted compositions, tailor-made for the performers and often including scenic elements and spatial sound concepts, are characteristic of Vito Žuraj's work. Born in Maribor in 1979, his works have quickly gained recognition at major concert halls and festivals, interpreted among others by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Ensemble Modern and the RIAS Kammerchor. Vito Žuraj has been honoured with several prizes, including the city of Stuttgart's composition award and the Prešeren Award, the highest decoration for artists in Slovenia. In 2014 he was invited to be a fellow at the Villa Massimo in Rome, the Berlin Academy of Arts and the ZKM Karlsruhe. Vito Žuraj was awarded the Claudio Abbado Composition Prize in spring 2016 by the Berliner Philharmoniker's Orchestra Academy. The prize includes a commission for a work for soprano, piano and instrumental groups, that will be premiered in November 2017.

Vito Žuraj studied composition with Marko Mihevc in Ljubljana and continued his studies with Lothar Voigtländer in Dresden and Wolfgang Rihm in Karlsruhe. His experience with the technology and aesthetics of electronic sound generation – gained during a master's programme in music technology with Thomas A. Troge and at the ZKM Karlsruhe, and consolidated through co-operations with the Experimentalstudio des SWR and IRCAM – does not only serve him for his own compositional work: as a professor of composition at the Music Academy in Ljubljana since 2015, he initiated the setting up of an electronic music studio, parallel to his lectureship in Karlsruhe.

His participation in the International Ensemble Modern Academy in 2009/10 was the starting point for his close collaboration with the soloist ensemble. The Ensemble Modern has since premiered works such as *Übürall* (2013, with soprano Hélène Fauchère and conducted by Brad Lubman) and *Runaround* for four soloists and instrumental groups (2014). An avid tennis player himself, Vito Žuraj often draws musical inspiration from this sport. He uses his insight into certain game situations as a basis for a constantly growing series of works, which includes *Changeover* for instrumental groups and symphony orchestra, premiered by the Ensemble Modern and the hr-Sinfonieorchester under Johannes Kalitzke in 2011.

Numerous other ensembles and orchestras also regularly perform works by Vito Žuraj. The Klangforum Wien took his composition *Fired-up*, written in 2013, on tour to festivals and venues including the Festival MiTo in Milan, ORF Musikprotokoll, festival Manifeste at the IRCAM in Paris and the Wiener Konzerthaus. The Wittener Tage für neue Kammermusik presented the premiere of *Aftertouch* with the oenm under the baton of Johannes Kalitzke in 2015. His semi-staged composition *Insideout* was premiered by the Scharoun

Ensemble directed by Matthias Pintscher with Mojca Erdmann and Dietrich Henschel at the Salzburg Festival in 2013 and was performed again by the New York Philharmonic in 2014. His opera *Orlando. The Castle*, produced in co-operation with the Deutsche Bank Foundation's Academy Musiktheater heute, was premiered in Bielefeld in 2013.

Recordings of Vito Žuraj's works have been published on the label Neos, among others. A portrait CD was recently released by Wergo as part of the contemporary music edition of the German Music Council. It includes recordings with the Ensemble Modern and the hr-Sinfonieorchester, as well as the horn concerto *Hawk-eye*, interpreted by Saar Berger and the Slovenian Philharmonic. Last summer, the horn player performed the work again with the Konzerthausorchester Berlin under Simone Young.

Highlights of last season included the performance of his works *Insideout* and *Contour* with the Ensemble intercontemporain at the Philharmonie de Paris as well as premieres at the Movimentos Festival in Wolfsburg and the Festival Archipel in Geneva. *I-formation*, a work for two orchestras commissioned by KölnMusik and written for the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Cologne Philharmonie, was premiered in September 2016 by the WDR Symphony Orchestra and the Gürzenich-Orchester Köln.

Following the premiere of *Do-over* in March 2017, commissioned by the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester, the Ensemble Modern will give a portrait concert in the new Hamburg Elbphilharmonie in April. This season, Vito Žuraj is in residence at the Philharmonic Orchestra of Theater Erfurt, during which he will compose a new work for two percussionists and orchestra, which will be performed in early 2018 as part of the "Erfurts Neue Noten" project.

2016/2017 season

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<http://www.vitozuraj.com>

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