

## Raminta Šerkšnytė

Composer

“My connection with Raminta Šerkšnytė’s music is very personal. Probably what fascinates me most is the poetic quality and the mystery of this composer and her work. The “Ramintacism,” the minor thirds. Her personal voice. This voice is also of the highest value in an international context, and her music deserves to reach the widest possible audience.”

- *Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla, Conductor*



Raminta Šerkšnytė, composer and pianist, first appeared on the musical scene in the 1990s and, up until now, maintains her position as one of the best-known Lithuanian composers of recent times. Her *De Profundis* for string orchestra (1998), which maestro Gidon Kremer named “the calling card of Baltic music,” has become one of the most often performed Lithuanian compositions across the world.

One of her newer works, *...this too shall pass...* for violin, violoncello, vibraphone and string orchestra, was premiered by Kremerata Baltica in September 2021 at the Kronberg Festival. Followed by many repeat performances, it will now also be released by ECM.

Her latest work, *Te Deum*, was commissioned by the Duisburger Philharmoniker in honour of Vilnius’ 700<sup>th</sup> Birthday and a longstanding partnership between the two cities. It will be premiered in September 2023 under the direction of Lithuanian conductor Giedrė Šlekytė.

Raminta’s music is distinguished by its poetic nature, its imagination and for its one-of-a-kind beauty, created by Baltic mysticism and melancholy. The search for and coexistence of archetypes from both Western and Eastern cultures are inherent in her music. Her works contain a broad range of emotions: from meditation with hints of mystery to dramatic outbursts of vital energy, though poignant *Sehnsucht* is predominant throughout. The compositions are dashing and expressive, with the dense textures, and prominent poly-rhythmic and polymodal features. She fuses classical, Lithuanian ancient folk and avant-garde musical languages and articulates her own composing system as the “fusion of major and minor” (which often sounds as non-traditional tonality). This “major-minor” system is based on two opposite elements (like modes of minor/major thirds and “light” and “dark” sonorities).

Šerkšnytė’s oeuvre is rich and versatile: from large-scale opera (*Five Miracles of Mary*), multimedia projects (*Gloria* for brass quintet, choir, symphony orchestra, tape and video projection) to intimate chamber pieces (*Fantasia* for piano) or pieces for a young audience (*Fairy-tale of the Little Prince* for flute and orchestra). As a composer, she is also distinguished by her fluency within several styles - from pure melodic-ground compositions (cantata-oratorio *Songs of Sunset and Dawn*) to conceptual complex instrumental pieces (*Vortex* for violin and ensemble). She is best known for her orchestral music (*De Profundis*, *Midsummer Song*, *Iceberg Symphony*, *Fires*) where subtle, synesthetic colourful orchestration comes together with a dramatically mighty and virtuosic sound.

Raminta’s main artistic inspiration is the universal rules of harmony in nature with its metaphorical comparison to the archetypal human state of mind. Her poetic titles are always rooted in figurative sense and



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semantic aspects always sit alongside the structural considerations of her composition. Of her craft, Raminta states: "I believe that peak experience and spiritual impact is the essence in the art, which can lead to the unforgettable transcendental experience. Composition is an uplifted state of mind materialized by means of sounds, though its impressiveness depends on the composer's technical mastery."

Her music has been performed by the Kremerata Baltica Chamber Orchestra (under artistic director Gidon Kremer), City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Concertgebouworkest, Münchner Philharmonikern, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France (Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla), Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra (under maestro Mariss Jansons), the Juilliard Orchestra, the Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra (conductor Modestas Pitrenas), violinist Irvine Arditti, Strasbourg Percussionists and many other musicians. Her works have been performed in concerts around the globe, at venues such as the Lincoln Centre (New York), Glenn Gould Studio (Toronto), Vienna Musikverein, Berlin Philharmonic. Her music has been featured at the following festivals: ISCM World Music Days (Hong-Kong, Tongyeong, Ghent, Zagreb and Vilnius), Gaudeamus Music Week (Amsterdam), Baltic Sea festival (Sweden), Luzerne festival, to name a few.

In 2008, Raminta was awarded the prestigious Lithuanian National Arts and Culture Prize (the highest artistic distinction in Lithuania). She is also a winner of the composition competition Coup de Coeur des Jeunes Musiciens (Prince Pierre Foundation, Monaco, 2011), after being nominated by Arvo Pärt. Raminta's music is included in releases by Naxos, Nonesuch and Lithuanian Music Information and Publishing Centre. In 2019 Deutsche Grammophon released her portrait CD.

Raminta born in Kaunas, Lithuania. She initially studied piano and later composition (under Prof. Osvaldas Balakauskas) at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theater and also participated in various composers' masterclasses. Raminta lives and works in Vilnius, Lithuania.

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