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Thomas SIMAKU

(b. 1958)



"...the elegance of Ligeti and the gritty intensity of Kurtág, a fascinating combination." *Fanfare Magazine, USA, 2008*

Albanian-born British composer Thomas Simaku (b. 1958) studied composition at the Tirana Conservatoire (1978-82) and the University of York (1991-96) where he was awarded a PhD in Composition, studying with David Blake. Winner of the coveted Lionel Robbins Memorial Scholarship in 1993 (Simaku was the only candidate in the UK to win the award that year), he also was the 1996 Leonard Bernstein Fellow in Composition at Tanglewood Music Centre in the USA studying with Bernard Rands, and a fellow at the Composers' Workshop, California State University (1998), with Brian Ferneyhough.

Simaku's music has been reaching audiences all over Europe and the USA for over a decade, and it has been awarded a host of accolades for its highly expressive qualities and its unique blend of drama, intensity and modernism.

Notable performances include, among others, those given by the Kreutzer Quartet, Arditti Quartet, English Northern Philharmonia, European Union Chamber Orchestra, MusikFabrik, Polish Radio Chamber Orchestra, the New London Orchestra, Amsterdam New Music Ensemble, Goldberg Ensemble, Tokyo Phonosphere Musicale, Insomnio Ensemble, Capricorn Ensemble, Norwegian Medieval Trio, New Music Players, Concorde (Dublin) and Austrian 'Ticom' Ensemble. Internationally renowned soloists such as Peter Sheppard Skaerved, Noriko Kawai, Rohan de Saram, Garth Knox, Ian Pace and Madeleine Shapiro have performed his solo pieces.

Simaku's works have been performed in festivals such as ISCM ('95, '99, 00, '01, '03, '04, '05, '06), Huddersfield, Rome, Venice, Tanglewood, Miami, Manchester, Zagreb Biennale, Munich Biennale, Cagliari, Odense (Denmark), KlangSpectrum (Austria), Viitassari (Finland), etc. Broadcasts of his music include those by the BBC Radio 3, Radio-France, ORF (Austria), SWR2, MDR, ADR (Germany), RDP Portugal, ABC (Australia), Swedish, Polish, Hellenic, Danish, Israeli, Croatian, Swiss, Icelandic and Brazil national radio stations. A concert-portrait featuring his music took place at the 2003 Begegnungen Internationale Konzertserie in Innsbruck, Austria. In 2000 he was granted British citizenship and now lives in York with his wife and two daughters.

Winner of a number of prestigious awards such as Serocki International Prize and Lutoslawski Award, AHRC Fellowship, Leverhulme Research Fellowship, DAAD Award, and Honourable Mention at the Musical Personalities International Competition - Alexander Tansman 2006, Simaku is a lecturer in composition at the University of York.

His CD on Naxos 21st Century Classics series, released in May 2008, has been met with much critical acclaim.

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LIST OF SELECTED WORKS

ORCHESTRAL

Arc-en-ciel 15'
Concerto for cello and orchestra
picc.2(2nd+af).2.2(2rd+bcl).2(2rd+cbn) / 2.3.2.1 / perc(2) / str/
vc solo
ISMN M 57020 949 1 score: £30
performance materials for hire

The Eagle on the Cross (1998) 17'
for full orchestra
3(2nd+picc, 3rd+af).3.3(3rd+bcl).3(3rd+cbn) / 4.3.3.1 /
pf.cel.hp.perc(4) / str
first performance: English Northern Philharmonia,
conducted by Elgar Howarth, Spring Festival of
Contemporary Music, York, 30 April 1999
ISMN M 57020 202 7 score: £40
performance materials for hire

Hyllus (2004) 16'
for full orchestra
3(3rd+picc).3(3rd+ca).3(3rd+bcl).3(3rd+cbn) / 4.3.3.1 /
pf.hp.cel.acc.perc(4) / str
first performance: Slovenian Radio/TV Orchestra,
conducted by Sian Edwards, ISCM/Zagreb Biennale
Festival, 21 April 2005
ISMN M 57020 844 9 score: £37
performance materials for hire

Plenilunio II per Orchestra d'Archi (2003-04) 13'
for chamber string orchestra - 6.6.4.3.1
First Prize of the 2004 Serocki International Competition
first performance: Polish Radio Chamber Orchestra,
conducted by Agnieszka Duczmal, 6 June 2004
ISMN M 57020 755 8 score: £30
performance materials for hire

The Three-Arched Bridge 15'
for symphony orchestra
3(3rd+picc).3.3(3rd+bcl).3(3rd+cbn) / 4.3.3.1 /
pf.cel.hp.timp.perc(4) / str / 54 police whistles
ISMN M 57020 939 2 score: £30
performance materials for hire

LARGE ENSEMBLE (8 OR MORE PLAYERS)

Illuminazione (1998-9) 12'
for chamber ensemble
1.1.1(+bcl).0 / 1.0.0.0 / pn. perc(2) / 1.0.1.1.0
commissioned by the Chamber Ensemble of the Opera
North Players with funds provided by the Yorkshire and
Humberside Arts Council
first performance: Northern Aldborough Festival, 5 July
2001
ISMN M 57020 206 5 score: £25
performance materials for hire

Insomnio for fifteen players (2007) 16'
for large ensemble
1(+af).1.bcl(+cl).1 / 1.0.0.0 / acoustic gtr. mand. hp.
pno(+cel) perc(1) / 1.1.1.1.1
commissioned jointly by the Deutschlandfunk and
Insomnio Ensemble
first performance: Forum Neuer Musik 2007,
Deutschlandfunk, Cologne, conducted by Ulrich Pöhl 24
March, 2007
ISMN M 57020 955 2 score: £45
performance materials for hire

Luxonorité (2001) 9'
for chamber ensemble
2(1st+picc).0.2(2nd+bcl).0.asx.tsx / 1.2.1.1 /
pf.acc.perc(1) / 0.0.2.3.0
first performance: Luxembourg Sinfonietta, International
Composition Prize Luxembourg, 20 April 2002
ISMN M 57020 697 1 score: £25
performance materials for hire

Pas de deux (2002) 12'
for solo string quintet and children's string ensemble
commissioned by the Goldberg Ensemble
first performance: Goldberg Contemporary Festival,
Manchester, the Goldberg Ensemble, 16 January 2002
ISMN M 57020 695 7 score: £30
performance materials for hire

Plenilunio (1998) 8'
for twelve solo strings - 4.3.2.2.1
first performance: European Union Chamber Orchestra,
conducted Lavard Skou Larsen, University of York, 26
February 1999
ISMN M 57020 204 1 score: £37
performance materials for hire

Radius (2004) 13'
for 11 solo strings
commissioned by the Goldberg Ensemble
first performance: Goldberg Ensemble, conducted by
Malcolm Layfield, Huddersfield, UK, 14 February 2005
ISMN M 57020 842 5 score: £30
performance materials for hire

Réflexions de la Croix II (2003) 12'
for large ensemble
1(+afl).0.1.bcl.0 / 0.1.0.0 / perc(1) / pno/ 1.1.1.1.0
first performance: Ticom Ensemble, 30 November 2003
Innsbruck, Austria
ISMN M 57020 875 3 study score: £40
performance materials for hire

Réflexions de la Croix III (2005) 14'
for violin and large ensemble
afl, cl(+bcl), tpt, pf, perc(1) / 1.1.1.1.0
first performance: Peter Sheppard
Skaerved/Copenhagen Sinfonietta, cond. Frans
Rasmussen, Royal National Library Hall *Den Sorte
Diamant*, Copenhagen, 30 April 2005.
Selected by the International Jury of the 2006 ISCM –
World Music Days Festival in Stuttgart, performed by
Hannah Weirich and MusikFabrik Ensemble, cond.
Johannes Debus, 18 July 2006.
ISMN M 57020 846 3 study score: £40
performance materials for hire

SMALL ENSEMBLE (4-7 PLAYERS)

Réflexions de la Croix I (2003) 9'
for chamber ensemble
afl, cl(+bcl), pf, perc, vn, vc
first performance: Concorde Ensemble, Dublin, 7 March
2004
ISMN M 57020 727 5 study score: £21
score and parts: £38

Radius – String Quartet No. 2 (2003) 14'
written for and dedicated to the Kreutzer Quartet
first performance: Kreutzer Quartet, Augsburg
International Festival Germany, 17 May 2003
ISMN M 57020 769 5 score: £25

Voci Celesti – String Quartet No. 3 (2004) 13'
Second Prize of the 2005 Lutoslawski Award
first performance: Rubenstein Quartet, Warsaw, 14
February 2005
ISMN M 57020 924 8 score: £18
score and parts: £30

SOLOS, DUOS AND TRIOS

a2 (a) for viola and cello (2008) 10'
dedicated to Garth Knox and Rohan de Saram
first performance: Intrasonus Festival Venice, 3 May 2008
ISMN M 57036 011 6 score: £13

a2 (b) for violin and cello (2008) 10'
dedicated to Peter Sheppard Skaerved and Neil Heyde
ISMN M 57036 013 0 score: £13

Clarimbasso (2008) 10'
for bass clarinet and percussion
dedicated to Maria & Damien Harron
first performance: York Late Music Festival, 9 June 2008
ISMN M 57036 020 8 score: £13

des pas chromatiques (2005) 8'
hommage à Debussy for piano
ISMN M 57020 860 9 score: £18
also available as part in the solo piano volume *Pianthology* £12

Due Sotto-Voci per Violino Solo (2003) 13'
dedicated to Peter Sheppard Skaerved
first performance: Peter Shepard Skaerved
New York, 25 February 2003
ISMN M 57020 768 8 score: £18

The Flight of the Eagle (2001) 8'
for solo piano
first performance: Ian Pace, University of York, 18 June
2002
ISMN M 57020 214 0 score: £21

From Across the Sea (2006)
for 2 flutes and clarinet
part of 'On Track', UYMP's Grade 4-level Education
Volume
ISMN M 57020 908 8 score and parts: £20

Soliloquy I (1998) 10'
for solo violin
first performance: Vania Lecuit, ISCM, World Music Days
in Luxembourg 4 October 2000
ISMN M 57020 208 9 score: £18

Soliloquy II (2001) 13'
for solo cello
ISMN M 57020 209 6 score: £18

Soliloquy III (2002) 11'
for solo viola
first performance: Joel Hunter, Goldberg Contemporary
Festival, Manchester, 16 February 2002
ISMN M 57020 210 2 score: £18

Soliloquy IV (2008) 11'
for bass clarinet
ISMN M 57036 057 4 score: £18

Soliloquy V, Flauto Acerbo (2008) 11'

for alto and tenor recorders, commissioned by Christopher Orton with funds provided by the BBC Performing Arts Fund. First performance by Christopher Orton at the Greenwich International Early Music Festival, 16 November 2008.

Winner of the BASCA Award 2009 for the solo/duo instrumental category.

ISMN M 57036 058 4 score: £13

Stepping Up (2009) 11'

for solo piano

ISMN M 57036 118 2 score: £13

VOICE AND 0-3 INSTRUMENTS

Three Albanian Folk Songs (2001) 9'

for two sopranos and alto
written for the Norwegian Mediaeval Trio
first performance: Birmingham Early Music Festival, 10 November 2001

ISMN M 57020 213 3 conducting score: £17
choral score: £5

CHOIR, ACCOMPANIED

Silver (1995) 6'

for choir (SAA) and piano
commissioned by the New London Children's Choir with funds by the Ralph Vaughan Williams Trust
first performance: New London Children's Choir, conducted by Ronald Corp, St. John's Smith Square, 21 March 1996

ISMN M 57020 212 6 conducting score: £12
choral score: £4

Three Albanian Folk Songs (2001) 9'

for female choir

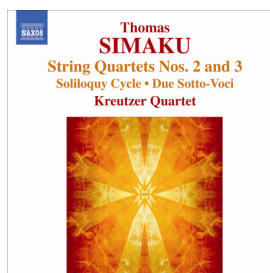
ISMN M 57020 708 4 conducting score: £17
choral score: £5

IN PREPARATION

Stepping Up for solo piano 11'

Raggio Lunare for solo piano 10'

RECORDINGS



CD Portrait on Naxos 21st Century Classics series

Performed by the Kreutzer Quartet.
Six works, including **String Quartets nos. 2 and 3**,
Soliloquy Cycle, Duo Sotto – Voci.
Released worldwide 28 April 2008.
Naxos 8.570428.

des pas chromatiques – hommage à Debussy

included in the CD of *Pianthology* Album – seven contemporary piano works performed by Nicky Losseff, published by UYMP, released March 2008.

A CD of live performances of Simaku's music is available for perusal. Please contact Michael Hooper at michael@uympp.co.uk for more information.

PRESS QUOTES

"I get the sense of pure music in a serious vein, its composer driven only by an internal need to express himself."

Fanfare Magazine, USA, September/October 2008,

"Simaku's idiom combines avant-gardism and modality in a manner all its own."

Avangarde und Ethnologie vereint, by Frank Kämpfer, Deutschlandfunk, Cologne, July 2008

"Tumultuous and glistening, with a deeply convincing inner strength, structural integrity and an impressively thunderous character." Politiken - Copenhagen, 2005

[Hyllus for Orchestra]

"... an imaginative and captivating piece."

ISCM - World New Music Magazine, July 2006
“... a piece of controlled, dramatic and surprisingly individual power.”
Keith Potter, *Tempo*, Cambridge, April 2005

[String Quartets]

"Thomas Simaku's string quartets have much to commend them ... Simaku has a keen ear for the texture of sounds. He writes sympathetically and perceptively for the strings, taking full advantage of the varying timbres in their individual sonorities. His collective, co-operative statements could be loud and stern or soft and laid-back. An inner core of firmness, self-acceptance and repose underpin a series of animated explorations, almost imperceptibly. This stability renders sound free to soar and experiment. These 'voices from heaven' have an animated serenity, quite secular, outside time." Kenneth Carter - *Classical Source*, July 2007

[Réflexions de la Croix III]

"... the only work in the concert which had a real individual charisma."
Stuttgarter Nachrichten, July 2006 - Review of musikFabrik concert at the ISCM, Stuttgart

"This work was written for the brilliant Sheppard Skaerved, whose virtuoso violin playing fascinated the audience as it penetrated the ensemble's dynamic, streaming energy."
Politiken - Copenhagen, 2005

[Radius for 11 solo strings]

" ... the work's periodic climactic outbursts achieved striking effect."
The Guardian

[Soliloquy I]

"In Simaku's Soliloquy, the expressive and technical potential of the solo violin is brilliantly transformed into an intense dramatic flow, where everything makes sense."
Politiken - Copenhagen

"A piece of unaccompanied violin writing which brings out the instrument's genius for passionate expression, fully realised in the young Luxembourg violinist Vania Lecuit's riveting interpretation."
Peter Graham Woolf - *Seen & Heard*, London - review of the ISCM Festival, Luxembourg 2000

"...what surprised the public the most and motivated the most comments, was Soliloquy by Simaku ... [who] demonstrated an astonishing knowledge of the violin."

mundoclassico, Spain, 2002

[Soliloquy III]

"... Soliloquy III for solo viola by Thomas Simaku explores a wide range of high harmonics and microtonal effects, rapidly switching from violent chordal attacks to spare bowed fragments, reminiscent of Georgy Kurtág in its spare atomistic compression."
Sun-Sentinel, Florida - review of the American Premiere at Miami ISCM festival 2002

[The Eagle on the Cross]

"The technical command, dramatic pacing and vivid orchestration made for a seriously impressive musical essay with a real sense of purpose and outrage." *Yorkshire Evening Press*, 1999

[Three Albanian Folk Songs]

"The elegant quality of the dark-sounding songs, by Thomas Simaku, was never in doubt."
Birmingham Post, 2001