

Petra Strahovnik: Prana (2018)



RTV Slovenia Symphony Orchestra
conductor: Rossen Milanov

duration | **13:19**

recording | **2018, Cankarjev dom, Gallus Hall**

music producer | **Žiga Stanič**

sound engineers | **Aleks Pirkmajer Penko, Klemen Veber**

I would like you to decide for yourself whether or not to read on.

The new work entitled *Prana* is written for large orchestra and solo performers arranged around the concert hall in order to achieve a “surround sound” effect in live performance. The RTV Slovenia Symphony Orchestra was prepared to experiment with new techniques and the use of preparations such as magnets on strings, polystyrene in the piano and harp, etc. The sound sculpture resulting from the basic use of these preparations is interesting and fresh, and the musicians were willing to keep up with the times and prepare their instruments.

The inspiration for this work stems from the idea of creating and capturing the atmosphere of attraction between two contrasting poles (e.g., magnetic resonance). The concept of capturing “Prana” as inspiration; in Hinduism, it represents the breath of the life force.

“Prana is understood as a universal energy that flows in currents in and around the body.”

Attractiveness – interpersonal energy, being, dimensions, connection, compassion, empathy.

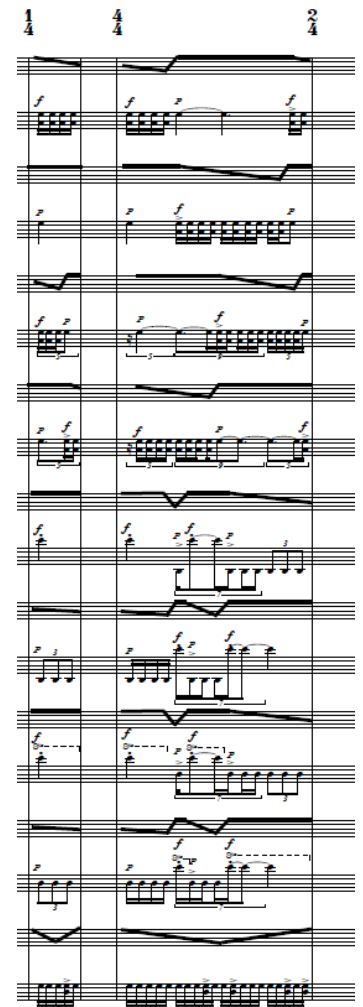
Each artwork should be approached without any predispositions.

Free your thoughts.

Observe, feel, sense, touch ... as if it is the first time.

Free yourself of random thoughts and connections to past experiences.

Be here and now.



Petra Strahovnik, born in Celje in 1986, completed a masters degree with distinction under the mentorship of Uroš Rojko at the Ljubljana Academy of Music. In 2014, she gained a masters degree with the highest grade from the Royal Conservatory in The Hague, The Netherlands, having studied under the mentorship of Peter Adriaansz and Martín Padding. Her studies in the Netherlands were supported by a scholarship from the Slovenian Ministry of Culture and a grant from the Municipality of Žalec. In July 2015, she also completed a specialisation in electronic music. Her diverse compositions, including solo, chamber, vocal, instrumental and orchestral works, have been performed at festivals, concerts and seminars throughout Europe and beyond.

From the very beginning, when composing, Petra followed her own path of discovering “new” sounds, and she never confined herself to traditional thinking about sound and music. She is well aware of how the audience perceives sound in space, and she employs “mechanical/electronic” sounds with the use of rare earth magnets and mechanical sound amplifiers.

Petra’s source of inspiration often comes from outside music, such as the barriers of modern society, human experience in society, and the fundamental questions and theories of humanity and the universe. In recent years, she has followed the path of her own activism of “unlimited thinking” and “unlimited listening” of music (including her own). She does not want to dictate her listeners’ experience of her music, preferring each listener to have his or her own experience. This musical philosophy is loosely derived from Socrates’ quote: “I cannot teach anyone anything – I can only encourage them to think.”

In 2013, her first (chamber) opera entitled *Becoming the System* was staged, gaining excellent reviews in Amsterdam and enjoying three repeat performances (including at the Gaudeamus Festival in Utrecht).

The composition *Between East and West* received an award at the MusMa Festival and was consequently performed in five European countries. At the international competition of the Koper Biennale in 2012, Petra received the award of both the audience and the jury for her work *Awareness*.

Based on the book *Balerina, Balerina* by Marko Sosič and dealing with the subject of autism, her composition *Panisteriah* has been performed several times in Slovenia and the Netherlands. In September 2011, Petra represented Slovenia at the EU-ART-NETWORK in Austria with her work *Obsession*. Mr S. C. Trowell (England) gave Petra a scholarship to attend the Gaudeamus Music Week seminar in Amsterdam in September 2010.

In January 2011, she received the Student Prešeren Prize for her musical achievements.

Her work *Awareness* was selected for the 26th International Review of Composers in Serbia. Petra was also selected as one of fifteen composers at the 24th Young Composers Meeting – Orkest de Erepijs, where she presented her new piece *Aum*.

In the Netherlands, where Petra currently lives and works, she is known for her incisiveness and her uncompromising approach to creating her visions.

She has worked with various musicians and ensembles active in the Netherlands, including many recognised and respected artists such as Asko | Schönberg, Slagwerk Den Haag, the Ives Ensemble, the Nieuw Ensemble, Modelo62, etc. Her works were selected by the Dutch commission for the World Music Days in two consecutive years. In 2017, she was invited to join the society GENECO, among professionally recognised Dutch composers.

The two-year project entitled *Mental DisOrders*, which Petra conceived with the ensemble Modelo62, was supported in 2018 by the Dutch state fund Fonds Podiumkunsten. The project commenced in August 2018 with an intense workshop for musicians, conductors, composers and other artists involved, under the guidance of renowned performer/artist Jürgen Fritz. Then there are activist experimental solo works (each on their own theme of mental difference, bipolar disorder, depression, etc.), which will be presented in galleries in The Hague and elsewhere, as well as three ensemble works integrated into a whole, to be presented at the Gaudeamus Festival, Dag and de Branding, and many other locations. The project will conclude with an opera based on the book *Balerina, Balerina* by Marko Sosič, which will be premiered in Slovenia in 2020.

Petra collaborates with numerous Slovenian musicians, choirs and ensembles, including the ensemble MD7, the APZ Tone Tomšič Choir, Kompulz and others.

(Translation: Neville Hall)

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