
Larisa Vrhunc: ... glass sky, silk ... (2018)



Nina Prešiček, piano
Larisa Vrhunc, electronics

duration | **12:00**
recording | **2019, Studio 13, Radio Slovenia**
music producer | **Brina Nataša Zupančič**
sound engineer | **Matjaž Mastnak**

The glass sky
broke,
above us soft, dark clouds.
Silk.

The main inspiration for the composition was the last of the three stanzas of Srečko Kosovel's poem *Impresija (Impression)*. The title itself hints at the contradictions that are the supporting idea of the composition. The hardness and softness of piano sound. Piano sound in its fullness or as a wave, a breath, hidden beneath the surface. Technology as a sonic microscope of the acoustic reality or as a generator of a sine wave for reinforcing decays. The glass sound of piano hammers and inharmonic spectra, the silk sound of resonances. The energy of the detail, the calmness of the whole.

The main musical attention is focused on two pairs of contrasting piano textures. After the initial presentation of the first and then the second pair, all four textures intertwine and finally break down. In the electronic part, the processed piano material is arranged in retrograde, except in the places where there are direct reactions to selected acoustic musical gestures. The piano is prepared slightly, facilitating a natural alternation between acoustic and electronic sounds. The song is dedicated to Nina Prešiček, a pianist with exceptional sensitivity and a wide palette of sonic colours. She also gave the premiere performance the original acoustic version, entitled *Za Nino (For Nina)*.

Larisa Vrhunc (b. 1967) studied music pedagogy and composition (with M. Gabrijelčič) at the Ljubljana Academy of Music, before continuing her studies of composition in Geneva at the Conservatoire de Musique de Genève (with J. Balissat) and privately (with E. Gaudibert). She completed her postgraduate studies in the masterclass of G. Amy at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Lyon in 1999 and was then a guest of the Künstlerhaus Schloß Wiepersdorf in Berlin for five months. She furthered her studies at various compositional courses (S. Gubaidulina, B. Ferneyhough, M. Jarrell, K. Huber, H. Lachenmann, H. Kyburz, P. Dusapin and others). In the autumn of 2000, she studied at the Paris institute IRCAM for one month.

Larisa Vrhunc is a full professor of music theory at the Faculty of Arts (Department of Musicology) of the University of Ljubljana. For her work she has received the Student Prešeren Prize, the TEMSIG Award, the Prešeren Fund Prize, the Prix Fondation Royaumont at the 1st European Composers Competition "Choeurs & Maîtrises de Cathédrales" (Amiens, France), the Prix du Conseil d'Etat (Geneva, Switzerland), one of three equivalent prizes at the European Woman Composers Competition (Nijmegen, The Netherlands) and first prize at the 2nd European Composers Competition "Choeurs & Maîtrises de Cathédrales" (Amiens, France). She was also one of eight prizewinners at the 13th Boswil International Composition Seminar and is a recipient of NEM scholarship (Montreal, Canada).

The image displays three systems of musical notation for piano. The first system includes a performance instruction: "3. Ped. (lutra menjava; držati do t.68)" and a dynamic marking of *mf*. The second system features dynamics of *mp* and *mf*. The third system includes a boxed number "5", a dynamic of *p*, and a dynamic of *mp*. The score uses treble and bass clefs and includes various musical notations such as chords, single notes, and rests.

For a number of years, she has been devoted to promoting contemporary art music amongst students, organising workshops with prominent composers and theoreticians as well as guided improvisations. She received her doctorate in the field of musicology from the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ljubljana in 2018. She has published two books: a manual on musical forms and a monograph entitled *The Influences of Spectral Music on Slovenian Compositional Creativity in the Last Few Decades*.

(Translation: Neville Hall)