

Liisa Hirsch

# Ascending...Descending

for violin and chamber orchestra  
(2015)

The first movement of the composition, “**Ascending**”, comprises three very slowly ascending clusters of glissandi that form harmonies on the microtonal landscape. The solo violin acts like a gatekeeper, creating space for concentration and always holding the lowest sound, or fundamental, from which all the other lines originate.

The second movement – “**...Descending**” – is comprised of orchestral glissandi that descend in mathematical proportions and accelerate with every cycle. A cycle comes to a conclusion when all the lines, in relation to each other, end up in parallel octaves.

As the motion accelerates, the direction of movement – instead of harmony or timbre – comes to the fore. The violin takes over or anticipates the sounds produced by the orchestral descents and brings forth the harmony that became rather misty behind the glissandi. What’s more, the violin with its accents provides cues for the orchestra to move from one chord to the next.

In the descent of the last movement, the role of the conductor disappears – only the soloist and the orchestra remain. The entire orchestral part creates itself via reacting to the impulses coming from the soloist.

In the solo part, there is no trace of virtuosity. According to the composer, she was more interested in the power of concentration and the sound of stringed instruments as such, which is a complex phenomenon in itself.

Performed by **Triin Ruubel** (violin) and **Tallinn Chamber Orchestra**, conductor **Atvars Lakstīgala**.



PHOTO: MARIJE VAN DEN

**Liisa Hirsch** (b. 1984) graduated from the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre in Prof. Toivo Tulev’s composition class. Hirsch has taught improvisation at Tallinn Music High School and worked as music director at the Estonian Drama Theatre. At present she studies for her MA at the Royal Conservatory in the Hague under Peter Adriaansz and Cornelis de Bondt. In 2015, Hirsch’s composition “Braitigan Circles” won the main prize at the Erenprijs Young Composers Meeting in Apeldoorn, Holland. Liisa Hirsch’s music is characterized by sensitivity to timbre, intense focus on sound, also solid structure and purity of form. In the main,

Hirsch has composed music for film and theatre and oftentimes she collaborates with choreographers and dancers.

Lately, she has been seeking to further the means of listening and better expressing the power of concentration in music – and thus to create an independent listening-space. Among the sources of inspiration in her work have been her meetings and music-makings with composers Christian Wolff and Antoine Beuger.

[soundcloud.com/liisa-hirsch](https://soundcloud.com/liisa-hirsch)