

## Hèctor Parra, Composer

### Biography

A tireless explorer of new artistic concepts, composer Hèctor Parra, born in Barcelona in 1976, is passionate about the visual arts, literature, evolutionary biology and theoretical physics – fields that inspire his musical work. In his stage and multidisciplinary projects, he not only works with leading writers and directors, but also regularly collaborates with visual artists and scientists.

The 2026/27 season is marked by a major world premiere: *Miroir de nos peines* will be staged at the Opéra national de Paris/Palais Garnier in April and May 2027, directed by Mariame Clément. Jean-Luc Vincent wrote the libretto based on the bestseller by Pierre Lemaitre, the spectacular conclusion to his trilogy about the interwar period in France leading up to the invasion by the German Wehrmacht in 1940. At the Casa da Música in Porto, Hèctor Parra will also take centre stage as Composer in Residence in 2026 and 2027, with revivals of key works and world premieres.

Hèctor Parra's works for the operatic stage have consistently attracted attention for years. *Das geopfert Leben* (The Sacrificed Life), based on a libretto by Marie NDiaye and composed for the Freiburger Barockorchester and the Ensemble Recherche, was received with great enthusiasm at the 2014 Munich Biennale. The following year, *Wilde* (libretto: Händl Klaus) had its world premiere at the Schwetzingen SWR Festival ("a masterpiece", *Süddeutsche Zeitung*). The opera *Les Bienveillantes* proved a resounding success; its libretto was written by Händl Klaus, based on the novel of the same name by Jonathan Littell, and it was staged by Calixto Bieito at Opera Vlaanderen. The international press hailed it as the "most important opera of the 21st century" (*La Vanguardia*), described its music as "extremely expressive and masterfully orchestrated" (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*) and called it a "borderline experience" (*Crescendo Magazine*). His next two operas received similarly euphoric reviews: *Orgia*, composed between 2022 and 2023 to a libretto by Calixto Bieito based on Pier Paolo Pasolini's tragedy, was awarded Spain's most prestigious opera prize, the Opera XXI Award. Most recently, *Justice* premiered at the Grand Théâtre de Genève in 2024. The highly political opera, directed by Milo Rau and based on a libretto by the Congolese writer Fiston Mwanza Mujila, moved audiences and critics alike: "An absolute triumph" (*Opera Actual*), "A new way of making opera" (*Anaclase*).

Music by Hèctor Parra also features regularly on the programs of festivals such as the Lucerne Festival, Wien Modern, the Donaueschinger Musiktage, the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival (Composer in Residence 2013) and the Rainy Days in Luxembourg, as well as in concert halls such as the Philharmonie de Paris, the Wiener Konzerthaus, the Auditorio Nacional de Música in Madrid and the Palau de la Música Catalana (Composer in Residence 2015–2018), the Nouveau Siècle in Lille (Composer in Residence 2017–2018), the Gasteig in Munich and Wigmore Hall in London. To date, he has received over a hundred commissions from institutions such as the Guggenheim Museum in New York, the Louvre, the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg, the Berlin Academy of Arts, the Gran Teatre del Liceu, the Stuttgart State Theatre, the Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord, the IRCAM-Centre Pompidou, the broadcasters SWR, WDR and Radio France, the Gürzenich Orchestra and the Cologne Philharmonic Orchestra. Ensembles and orchestras such as the Arditti Quartet, JACK Quartet, ensemble recherche, Klangforum Wien, the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra have performed his music.

Among the significant world premieres of the past decade are *Inscape* for soloist ensemble, orchestra and electronics, performed by the Ensemble intercontemporain and the Orquestra simfònica de Barcelona i Nacional de Catalunya (OBC) under Kazushi Ono at the Auditori in Barcelona in 2018, and *La mort i la primavera*, performed jointly in 2022 by the Remix Ensemble under Peter Rundel and the Ensemble intercontemporain under Lucie Leguay. In 2025, the OBC, conducted by Ludovic Morlot, gave the world premiere of *Deux constellations pour orchestre d'après Joan Miró*; in the same year, the WDR Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Christian Karlsen, premiered the concert opera *Ich ersehne die Alpen; So entstehen die Seen* (libretto: Klaus Händl) at the ACHT BRÜCKEN festival in Cologne.

After studying composition and piano at the Barcelona Conservatory of Music, Hèctor Parra completed the cursus in composition and computer music at IRCAM in 2002–2003, where he later taught composition. In 2005, he obtained a Master's degree in Art Sciences and Technology from the University of Paris VIII. He continued his composition studies from 2005 to 2006 with Michael Jarrell at the Haute École de Musique de Genève and received further inspiration from Jonathan

Harvey, Brian Ferneyhough, Beat Furrer and Philippe Manoury at IRCAM, the Royaumont Foundation Academy, the Centre Acanthes (France) and in Takefu (Japan). Alongside his musical studies, he studied painting and drawing in Francesc Miñarro's studio in Barcelona.

Hèctor Parra has been awarded numerous prizes and scholarships, including the 2025 SACD Music Prize, the 2025 Gold Medal from the Gran Teatre del Liceu, the Grand Prix of the Académie Charles Cros in 2024, the Alícia Prize 2022 from the Catalan Music Academy, a fellowship at the French Academy in Rome/Villa Medici in 2021–22, the Catalan National Culture Prize in 2017 and the Composition Prize from the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation in 2011.

Hèctor Parra has lived in Paris since 2002. His works are published by Durand/Universal Music Publishing Classical (since 2010) and by Editorial Tritó (1999 to 2010).

Website: <http://hectorparra.net/>

Season 2026/27

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