

## Isabel Mundry, Composer

### Biography

Isabel Mundry's work is characterized by a unique sonic language that investigates the relationships between time, space, and perception in rich, multi-faceted ways. In doing so, she creates new pathways and different realities in her compositions, which are explored through the timbre, harmony, and rhythms of her nuanced music.

Born in Hessen in 1963 and raised in Berlin, Isabel Mundry honed her composition skills under Frank Michael Beyer, Gösta Neuwirth, and Hans Zender, among others. This training was complemented by studies in musicology, art history, and philosophy, as well as a course in computer science and composition at the Paris IRCAM. After gaining attention in the 90s for her chamber music compositions and ensemble and orchestral works, her first music theatre work was a resounding success: in 2005, the premiere of *Ein Atemzug – die Odyssee* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin (Reinhild Hoffmann, staging; musical direction, Peter Rundel), was named best premiered work of the year by the magazine *Opernwelt*. In the work, the composer deals with layers of remembering and forgetting. Isabel Mundry's interest in fusing musical structure to spatial presentation continued with *Nicht Ich – über das Marionettentheater*, a concert staged and conceived with the dancer and choreographer Jörg Weinöhl; it premiered in 2011 at the Kleistfestival in Thun in a performance by the Ensemble Recherche and the Vokalensemble Zürich and was subsequently shown in Zurich, Basel, Lyon, Dusseldorf, and Salzburg.

Isabel Mundry's numerous works for solo instruments and orchestras include *Nocturno*, first performed in 2006 by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Daniel Barenboim and later interpreted by the Staatskapelle Berlin and Dresden, the RSO Vienna and the Hamburg Philharmonic. Her piano concerto *Ich und Du*, which premiered at the Donaueschinger Musiktage 2008 with the SWR Symphony Orchestra under Pierre Boulez, later expanded into *Non-Places*, a piano concerto. For the 2013 Happy New Ears Prize award ceremony, the work was premiered by the Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks under Emilio Pomàrico and it was subsequently awarded the German Music Authors' Prize by GEMA.

Among the world premieres of the last decade are works of various genres with diverse sources of inspiration: in *Vogelperspektiven* for ensemble (world premiere 2016, Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks), inspired by poems by Thomas Kling, Isabel Mundry gives life to the changing perspectives of the human and animal worlds. *Zu Fall*, premiered by Tonhalle Orchester Zürich 2016, investigates the relationship between activity and passivity and features onstage as a shadow play a chaotically oscillating pendulum, which conducts the conductor as it pendulates. In *Sounds, Archeologies*, premiered by Trio Catch at Berlin's Ultraschall Festival in 2018 and most recently performed at Wien Modern in 2023 and again at Musikfest Berlin in 2024, she questions the proximity or remoteness of historical objects and cultural identities. And in the a-cappella choral piece *Mouhanad*, based on an interview with a Syrian refugee and premiered in Donaueschingen by the SWR Vokalensemble in 2018, cultural resonances and new acoustic neighborhoods are examined.

In February 2020, *Noli me tangere*, her new work for percussion solo and ensemble, was premiered simultaneously at the final concert of the Festival Présences with Ensemble intercontemporain and in Cologne with Ensemble Musikfabrik. Further performances followed with the Collegium Novum Zurich and the Ensemble Arc-en-ciel. In 2022, Isabel Mundry was Artiste étoile of the Mozartfest Würzburg, during which *Signaturen* for two pianos, percussion and strings was premiered by the GrauSchumacher Piano Duo and Ensemble Resonanz. The Austrian premiere of the work took place at the Wien Modern festival; a further performance followed in February 2023 at the Elbphilharmonie. In 2022, Isabel Mundry was also Theme Composer of the Suntory Hall Summer Festival, where Nils Mönkemeyer and the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra under Michael Wendeberg premiered her viola concerto *Gesture*.

The focus of the last season was her composition *Invisible*, a spatial constellation about belonging, inclusion and exclusion. The highly acclaimed premiere by the vocal ensemble Exaudi and the Ensemble PHACE took place at the Wien Modern festival, which also presented her works in concerts with the Arditti Quartet, among others

The German premiere of *Invisible* was part of an extensive programme focus that Musikfest Berlin dedicated to the composer at the start of the current season. The final versions of *Figura* (Ensemble Musikfabrik, Marco Blaauw and Markus Schwind) and *Signaturen* (GrauSchumacher Piano Duo with Ensemble Resonanz) were also premiered at the three concerts in the Philharmonie's Chamber Music Hall. A new piano trio will be launched by the young Trio E.T.A. at the

Elbphilharmonie in March, followed by another trio for saxophone, piano and percussion for the Trio Abstrakt, which will be performed at the Museo Reina Sofía in Madrid in May. Finally, a new choral work will mark the end of the 50th anniversary season of the Rundfunkchor Berlin at the Konzerthaus Berlin. Isabel Mundry is also a member of the jury for the 6th Mauricio Kagel Composition Competition at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna.

Isabel Mundry's numerous awards and honours include the Kranichstein Music Prize in 1996, a 2001 Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation Composer Prize, and the 2011 Heidelberg Artists' Prize. In 2007/08 she was the Staatskapelle Dresden's first Capell-Compositeur, composer-in-residence. Isabel Mundry is a member of the Academy of the Arts in Berlin and Munich as well as the Academy of Sciences and Literature in Mainz. Since 1998, she has been a frequent lecturer at the Darmstadt Summer Courses. After holding a professorship at the Frankfurt University of Music and Performing Arts from 1996, she has been a professor of composition at the Zurich University of the Arts since 2004 and, since 2011, a professor at the University of Music and Performing Arts Munich.

Season 2024/25

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