

Johannes Maria Staud, Composer

Biography

Born in Innsbruck in 1974, the composer Johannes Maria Staud draws much of his inspiration from literature and the visual arts. Reflections on philosophical questions, social processes, and political events also influence his compositions. His artfully constructed works possess a rigorous dramaturgy.

Johannes Maria Staud studied composition with Michael Jarrell and electroacoustic composition with Dieter Kaufmann as well as musicology and philosophy in Vienna before continuing his compositional studies with Hanspeter Kyburz in Berlin. In 2002, just one year after graduating, he won the Erste Bank Composition Prize; in 2003 he received the International Rostrum of Composers prize and in 2004 the Ernst von Siemens Composers' Prize.

Prestigious commissions followed. In 2004/05 *Apeiron* was commissioned by the Berlin Philharmonic under Sir Simon Rattle. In 2006 *Segue* for violoncello and orchestra was commissioned by Heinrich Schiff and the Vienna Philharmonic under Daniel Barenboim for the Salzburg Festival. Johannes Maria Staud revised this work for Jean-Guihen Queyras, who premiered the new version in 2009 with the Konzerthausorchester Berlin under Lothar Zagrosek. In 2004, his first opera, *Berenice*, based on E. A. Poe, was premiered at the Munich Biennale, in co-production with the Vienna Festival and the Berlin Festival, in a production by Claus Guth.

His fascination with the work of Jewish writer and illustrator Bruno Schulz is reflected in works such as *Zimt*. The first part of this orchestral diptych, *On Comparative Meteorology*, was premiered in its original version in 2009 by the Cleveland Orchestra under Franz Welser-Möst, and in the revised version in 2010 by the Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra under Peter Eötvös; the second part, *Contrebände (On Comparative Meteorology II)*, was commissioned by Pierre Boulez for the Ensemble Modern and premiered in 2010. He was also composer in residence of the Staatskapelle Dresden in 2012.

Major ensemble works of the last years include *Auf die Stimme der weißen Kreide (Specter I-III)*, which was premiered by the Ensemble Modern at the Festival Musica in Strasbourg in 2015, and the diptych *Par ici - Par là*, performed for the first time in full by the Ensemble intercontemporain at the Acht Brücken festival 2016 in Cologne. The violin concerto *Oskar (Towards a Brighter Hue II)*, written for Midori, premiered in 2014 at the Lucerne Festival, as did the opera *Die Antilope* based on a libretto by Durs Grünbein, later also presented in Cologne, Vienna and Bolzano. The poet also provided the textual template for *Der Riss durch den Tag* (2011), a monodrama for Bruno Ganz, and for the opera *Die Weiden*, which premiered in 2018 at the Vienna Staatsoper and was revived in 2019.

Stromab ("Downstream"), was premiered in 2017 by the Royal Danish Orchestra under Alexander Vedernikov, with subsequent performances in Vienna (Vienna Symphony Orchestra under Francois-Xavier Roth), Cleveland and New York (Cleveland Orchestra under Franz Welser Möst). In 2018, the Vienna Philharmonic premiered his orchestral work *Scattered Light* without a conductor, followed by a performance in Berlin. He explored baroque alchemy for the works *Terra pinguis* and *Terra fluida*, premiered in 2019 by the Munich Chamber Orchestra and the Boulanger Trio respectively. In 2020 Martin Grubinger, brought *Epicentre. Seismic construction in 3 parts to life*, and the Ensemble PHACE premiered *Am Horizont (...schon ganz woanders...)*.

In 2021, the ensemble xx. Jahrhundert premiered *Listen, Revolution (we're buddies, see -)* at Wien Modern before the work was performed by the Ensemble Modern in Frankfurt. *Once Anything Might Have Happened* for soprano, horn, ensemble, and live electronics, commissioned by the Ensemble intercontemporain and IRCAM, was celebrated at its premiere during the ManiFeste festival in Paris in June with soprano Sophia Burgos and conducted by Matthias Pintscher. In 2023, Johannes Maria Staud's new music theatre work *Missing in Cantu*, with a libretto by Thomas Köck, premiered at the Kunstfest Weimar. It will be staged as Austrian premiere in the 2025/2026 season at the Tyrolean State Theatre in Innsbruck in a new production.

In the 2024/25 and 2025/2026 seasons, the percussion concerto *Whereas the Reality Trembles*, which had been premiered in autumn 2023 by Christoph Sietzen with the Cleveland Orchestra under Franz Welser Möst, was performed in Vienna, Munich, Essen, Stuttgart and Hamburg. *Stachel. Rhapsody for string orchestra* was premiered in 2025 by the Munich

Chamber Orchestra under Bas Wiegers and, as a co-commission of the Les Musicales de Quiberon festival under the baton of Pascal Gallois, was taken on tour to France by the MKO in the same year. With *Die schöne Müllerin/These Fevered Days*, Johannes Maria Staud created an instrumental version of Schubert's song cycle with seven new songs on texts by Emily Dickinson for tenor Christoph Prégardien. It was commissioned by Ensemble Kontraste, Casa da Música Porto, the Wiener Konzerthaus, Klangspuren Schwaz and the Osterfestival Tirol and interpreted by Ensemble Kontraste, Klangforum Wien and Ensemble Remix. A new organ work for Wolfgang Kogert and a piece for the Kuss Quartet, commissioned by the Carinthischer Sommer 2026, the Elbphilharmonie and the Wiener Konzerthaus, are also in the pipeline.

In 2015/2016, Johannes Maria Staud was a visiting professor at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, and since 2018, he has been Professor of Composition at the Mozarteum University in Salzburg. He received the Paul Hindemith Prize from the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival in 2009, the City of Vienna Music Prize in 2012, the Austrian Art Prize in 2022 and the Tyrolean State Prize for Art in 2025. He is co-initiator of the annual summer academy of composition Arco, which alternates between Marseille and Salzburg. In 2024, his portrait CD featuring chamber music compositions was released on the NEOS label, performed by the Boulanger Trio, the Ensemble Modern and the Ensemble Recherche, among others.

2025/26 season

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