Justė Janulytė, Composer

Biography

Justė Janulytė explores the musical perception of space and time through her large-scale, multi-layered textures and dynamic and harmonic metamorphoses that unfold as if in slow motion. She frequently composes for dense, monochromatic ensembles (strings only, wind instruments only or voices only). Without pauses, breaks or audible instrumental entries, this music flows in a constant motion – often inspired by the developmental cycles of natural phenomena, which the composer, born in Vilnius in 1982 and now living mainly in Italy, observes meticulously, and which are also reflected in many of her work titles.

Operating at the intersection of the aesthetics of minimalism, spectralism and electronics, she creates, on the one hand, sonic metaphors for visual ideas, as in *The Colour of Water* for solo saxophone and orchestra (2017), most recently performed by the WDR Symphony Orchestra under Peter Rundel, with Marcus Weiss as soloist. On the other hand, she explores the visual character of musical phenomena in works in which sound and image merge, such as *Sandglasses* for four cellos, electronics and video scenography, which premiered to great acclaim in Lithuania in 2010 and was subsequently presented at several international festivals for new music.

Two major world premieres of her works are on the programme for the Présences Festival in Paris in February 2027: *Aveu* for choir and ensemble, based on a text by Irène Gayraud, will be performed by the vocal ensemble Aedes and the Ensemble 2e2m. *Arborescence* for cello and orchestra, dedicated to Arvo Pärt, will receive its world premiere with Jean-Guihen Queyras and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, conducted by Jaap van Zweden. Other recent world premieres include *Uccelli et altre cose* (hr Symphony Orchestra conducted by Brad Lubman, cresc..biennale Frankfurt 2026), the choral work *L'attente* (Latvian Radio Choir conducted by Kaspars Putniņš, Baltic Music Days 2026) and *Encens* for cello and electronics (Francesco Dillon, IRCAM, ManiFeste 2026). *Iridescence* for choir and electronics, which premiered in 2023, and *Sleeping patterns*, first performed by the Ensemble Modern in 2022, are amongst the recent works that continue to be performed regularly by international ensembles.

Justė Janulytė regularly composes for leading ensembles and orchestras worldwide, including, to date, the Konzerthausorchester Berlin, the WDR Symphony Orchestra Cologne, the Orchestra Filarmonica della Fenice, the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, the Helsinki Philharmonic, the Warsaw Philharmonic, the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra, the Brno Philharmonic, the Munich Chamber Orchestra, Ensemble Modern, Klangforum Wien, the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, the London Sinfonietta, the Remix Ensemble Casa da Música, the Swedish Radio Choir, the SWR Vokalensemble and the BBC Singers. Her works have been conducted by, amongst others, Sylvain Cambreling, Olari Elts, Eliahu Inbal, Brad Lubman, Emilio Pomarico, Enno Poppe, Kristiina Poska, Kaspars Putniņš, Peter Rundel, Normunds Šnē, Bas Wiegers and Jörg Widmann. Her music has been performed at festivals worldwide, including the Sydney Festival, the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, the Venice Biennale, Milano Musica, the Holland Festival, Musica Nova Helsinki, Warsaw Autumn, the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, Maerzmusik (Berlin), the Witten Days for New Chamber Music, Klangspuren Schwaz, Festival Musica Strasbourg and the Rainy Days in Luxembourg. She composed her first film score in 2020 for *The Sign Painter* (directed by Viesturs Kairišs), followed by *Januar*, which won the award for Best International Feature Film at the Tribeca Film Festival.

Justė Janulytė studied piano, choral conducting and composition at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre under Bronius Kutavičius and Osvaldas Balakauskas, and at the Giuseppe Verdi Conservatoire in Milan under Alessandro Solbiati. She taught composition at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre (until 2023) and led numerous masterclasses, including at the Takefu International Music Festival in Japan (2023), Sounds of Now Vienna (2024) and Klangspuren Schwaz (2025). She has received prestigious awards for her works, including the Lithuanian Composers' Union Prize for the best work of the year on eight occasions, the Young Composers' Prize at the 2009 Rostrum des Compositeurs International Composition Competition, and, in 2017, the Lithuanian National Prize for Art and Culture, the country's highest artistic honour. In 2019, she won the Musica femina Munich competition, and in 2026 she was a fellow at the Arvo Pärt Centre. Her works have been published by Durand Salabert Esching since 2021.

2026/27 season

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