

## Mark Andre, Composer

### Biography

*Mark Andre reaches with such intensity for a stillness that almost bursts your eardrums.* Berliner Zeitung

Mark Andre, born in Paris in 1964, creates musical-existential experiences for the listener characterised by subtle, minutely worked-out processes of transformation. Central to his work is the question of disappearance, which shapes his approach to sound, form, and subject. The practicing Protestant is a sensitive explorer of sound, both in his delicate and concentrated chamber works as well as in his orchestral and music theatre pieces.

After his studies in France, including those at the Paris Conservatory with Claude Ballif and Gérard Grisey, Mark Andre found a new musical home in Germany. He describes his encounter with the music of Helmut Lachenmann, whose piano concerto score *Ausklang* he happened to stumble across, as having been a revelation. He subsequently went through extensive composition studies with Lachenmann in Stuttgart and studied musical electronics with André Richard at the experimental studio of Southwest German Radio, in the meantime shifting the focus of his life from France to Germany. Here, he soon received grants and prizes, such as the Kranichsteiner Music Prize at the Darmstadt Summer Courses for New Music (1996), first prize at the Stuttgart International Composers Competition (1997), and the composition prize from Frankfurt Opera (2001). Since 1998 he has taught regularly at the Darmstadt Summer Courses. In 2002 he received the Advancement Award from the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation, and in 2005 he travelled to Berlin as a participant of the DAAD Artists-in-Berlin Programme, where he has lived ever since.

Particular interest was aroused by the 2004 premiere of Mark Andre's tripartite music theatre work *...22, 13...* at the Munich Biennale. This work's title refers to a passage in the Apocalypse of St John. His orchestral triptych *...auf...*, which he completed in 2007, similarly references religious themes. Here, Mark Andre explored aspects of transition as relates to Christ's Resurrection. Mark Andre has a soft spot for German prepositions, grammatical elements with the function of transition, as illustrated in numerous other work titles such as those of the chamber music works written between 2001 and 2005: *...durch...*, *...zu...*, *...in...*, and *...als...*. Mark Andre's first opera, *wunderzaichen*, under Sylvain Cambreling's baton, became a highlight of the 2013/14 Stuttgart Opera season and was reprised there in 2018 in a revised version.

One of Mark Andre's most important works of the last decade is the clarinet concerto *über* written for Jörg Widmann and the SWR Symphony Orchestra, which won the Orchestral Prize at the Donaueschinger Musiktage. The violin concerto *an*, last performed in 2023 by Ilya Gringolts and the Vienna RSO as an Austrian premiere, had been premiered by Carolin Widmann in 2016 at the Acht Brücken festival in Cologne. Another significant work of recent years is the *Riss* trilogy for ensemble, with individual parts written for the Ensemble Modern, the Ensemble Musikfabrik and the Ensemble intercontemporain. His work for organ *iv15 himmelfahrt* was performed for the first time in October 2018 in Munich in the version for electronic stop action, before being performed with mechanical stop action in Bad Frankenhausen in 2019. In 2018/19 he was also commissioned by the Berlin Scharoun Ensemble to write *Drei Stücke für Ensemble*, which were performed at the Berlin Philharmonie and the Elbphilharmonie. *wohin*, a work for harp and ensemble, was premiered by the Ensemble intercontemporain at the Philharmonie de Paris in 2021 and performed again at the Pierre Boulez Saal Berlin in 2022. At the Musikfest Berlin in 2021, the 40-minute double bass solo piece *iv 18 "Sie fürchteten sich nämlich"* was on the programme. The world premiere, expertly performed by Frank Reinecke, was part of a two-part concert evening with Pierre-Laurent Aimard featuring five piano works by Mark Andre.

In 2022, the *rwh* cycle was performed with five Hanoverian choirs and the Ensemble Modern at the KunstFestSpiele Herrenhausen and subsequently at the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, followed by *rwh2* with the Gaechinger Cantorey and the ensemble ascolta at the Musikfest Stuttgart. *rwh 1-4* was heard again last season at the Wien Modern Festival in St Stephen's Cathedral with the ORF Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra and the Wiener Singakademie under Roland Kluttig. Another major cycle was completed in 2022 with the *Vier Echographien*: At the Rainy Days at the Philharmonie Luxembourg, Brad Lubman conducted the Orchestre Philharmonique de Luxembourg in the world premiere. The German premiere followed with the SWR Symphonieorchester under Teodor Currentzis (4. *Echographie* in Stuttgart, Hamburg, Freiburg and Berlin) and the Gürzenich Orchestra under François-Xavier Roth in Cologne (complete cycle). The cycle will be performed in Hamburg in February 2025 as part of the Elbphilharmonie Visions festival with the ORF Vienna Radio

Symphony Orchestra under Bas Wiegers. The orchestral work *Im Entschwinden* was premiered in 2023 by the Orchestre de Paris under the direction of Klaus Mäkelä at the Musikverein Wien, where Mark Andre was the focus artist in numerous concerts; the German premiere followed at the Elbphilharmonie. The WDR Sinfonieorchester under Peter Rundel has also interpreted the work in Cologne and Essen, as has the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin under André de Ridder as part of the Berlin Ultraschall Festival 2024. *Dasein 1* for ensemble and electronics was premiered with the Ensemble intercontemporain at the IRCAM festival ManiFeste in the Philharmonie de Paris in 2023 as the prelude to a new ensemble triptych.

The current season started with a great success for Mark Andre: the world premiere of *...selig ist...* for piano and electronics with Pierre Laurent Aimard was enthusiastically received at the Donaueschinger Musiktage. The work will also be on the programme of the Festival Styriarte in Graz in July 2025. *Vier Stücke für Ensemble* will be premiered in February by the österreichisches ensemble fuer neue musik at the Mozarteum Salzburg, followed by a new version of the *Sieben Stücke für Streichquartett* at the ACHT BRÜCKEN festival in May with the Kuss Quartett. A new piece for organ and double bass with Stephan Heuberger and Frank Reinecke will be performed as part of the musica viva series in Munich. Also in May, the short orchestral piece *Im Entfalten*, composed in homage to Pierre Boulez, will be performed at the Pfingstfestspiele Baden-Baden with the SWR Symphony Orchestra under François-Xavier Roth.

Mark Andre is a member of the Berlin Academy of the Arts, Saxon Academy of the Arts, and the Bavarian Academy of the Arts, and was honoured with the order of Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres in 2011. In 2012 he was a fellow of the Institute for Advanced Study in Berlin. He teaches composition at the Academy of Music in Dresden.

2024/25 season

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