

# Ondřej Adámek, Composer and Conductor

## Biography

*"He avoids romantic pathos just as much as esoterically spun L'art-pour-l'art-flattery. Thus Adámek's music remains comprehensible and purposeful at every moment."* Süddeutsche Zeitung, March 2021

The composer and conductor Ondřej Adámek develops a musical language that unfolds as a dialogue with more distant cultures. Directness and finely formed moments of expression with artfully composed timbres characterize his works, which include orchestral, chamber, vocal, and electroacoustic music.

Born in Prague in 1979, Ondřej Adámek studied composition at the Academy of Music in Prague and at the Conservatory in Paris. In 2010, he came to Berlin as a guest of the DAAD's Berlin Artists' Program, where he has lived ever since. During longer stays in France, Africa, Spain, Japan, India, and Italy, he immersed himself in the musical cultures of these countries, which subsequently shaped his own music time and again. The play with language(s) also emerges as a structuring element in many ways.

The 2023/24 season will see the premiere of a music theatre work: *INES* will be presented in June at Oper Köln under the direction of François-Xavier Roth in a production stage directed by librettist Katharina Schmitt. An adaptation of the Orpheus myth set in a fictional time after a nuclear disaster, the work explores the relationships between voice and trauma. Also in June 2024, Ondřej Adámek will be artist-in-residence at the Avanti! Festival in Finland, where he will conduct the Avanti! Orchestra with his works in two concerts. A performative work for the Ensemble Modern entitled *Connection Impossible* will be premiered in July 2024 at the Bregenz Festival as a co-commission with the Kölner Philharmonie.

With N.E.S.E.V.E.N., Ondřej Adámek explores the authenticity and originality of the voice as well as scenic possibilities. The a cappella opera *Seven Stones*, premiered in 2018 at the festival in Aix-en-Provence and shown again in 2022 at the Konzerthaus Dortmund, was the initial spark for the founding of the ensemble, which has since premiered several works: *Alles klappt* for 6 singers and two percussionists was shown with great success at the Munich Biennale in 2018; *Man Time Stone Time* was presented in Witten in 2019 with the WDR Sinfonieorchester under Michael Wendeborg and was again staged at the Festival Présence with the Orchestre de Radio France under Kent Nagano. In 2022, Adámek's music theatre *Reaching out* was shown at the Biennale Musica Venezia, where it was voted best production of the festival by the student jury; NESEVEN had premiered the work (choreography: Eric Oberdorff) for two dancers and two percussionists in Marseille in May 2022.

*Follow Me*, the violin concerto for Isabelle Faust premiered in 2017 by the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra under Peter Rundel, was also performed with the Orchestre de Strasbourg at Festival Musica and with the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra under Susanna Mälkki. *Alles klappt* ("Everything Works") for six singers and two percussionists was shown with great success at the Munich Biennale in 2018. In 2019 the Sheng concerto *Lost Prayer Book* toured Europe with performances at the WDR Funkhaus, the Philharmonie de Paris, the Southbank Centre London, as well as in Leicester, Den Bosch, and Amsterdam. The soloist Wu Wei performed with the Ensemble Musikfabrik conducted by the composer, the ensemble 2e2m under Pierre Roullier, the London Philharmonia Orchestra under Jonathan Stockhammer, and the Ensemble Asko/Schönberg under Bas Wiegers.

In 2021, Ondřej Adámek's composition *Where are you?*, which was taken on a European tour by the London Symphony Orchestra under Simon Rattle with soprano Magdalena Kožená, received a great deal of attention. The work was premiered by the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra under Simon Rattle and was heard at the Lucerne Festival, the Musikfest Berlin, as well as in Antwerp, Luxembourg, Dortmund, and Bucharest. In the same year, the cello concerto *Illusorische Teile des Mechanismus* was premiered by Jean-Guihen Queyras with the Ensemble Resonanz under the direction of Ondřej Adámek and was performed at the Acht Brücken festival in Cologne and at the Elbphilharmonie. As part of a new cycle of approaches to different musical cultures, Ondřej Adámek conducted Birmingham Contemporary Music Group with his new work *Whence comes the voice?*, which explores Qawwali music, to open the past season. Korean Pansori singing was the focus of *Let me tell you a story*, launched by Ensemble Modern under Tito Ceccherini at the Tongyeong International Music

Festival in spring 2023, where Ondřej Adámek was also represented with other works as artist-in-residence.

Always in search of sounds that go beyond the conventional orchestral apparatus, Ondřej Adámek developed the installative musical instrument Airmachine through years of experimental work. The mechanical apparatus with rubber gloves, horns, hoses, and all kinds of valves had been created for the work *Körper und Seele*, which premiered in Donaueschingen in 2014 with the SWR Vokalensemble and the SWR Sinfonieorchester Baden-Baden und Freiburg under François-Xavier Roth. In the meantime, it has taken on a musical life of its own, and has been constantly used and developed in further compositions.

Ondřej Adámek's works have been awarded numerous prizes, including the Prix de Bourges (IMEB, 2003), the Prix Métamorphoses (Belgium 2002, 2004), the Hungarian Radio Prize (2004), the Composer Prize of the Brandenburg Biennale (2006), the Prix Hervé-Dugardin (SACEM, 2009), the Grand Prix Tansman (Lodz 2010), the Prix George Enesco (SACEM, 2011), and the Composition Prize of the City of Stuttgart 2018. As a fellow at the Villa Medici (2014/15) and the Villa Massimo (2022/23), Ondřej Adámek came to Rome. The recording of *Where are you?* and *Follow me* with Magdalena Kožená, Isabelle Faust and the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by Peter Rundel and Sir Simon Rattle, released on the BR-KLASSIK label, was awarded the prestigious Premio Abbiati del Disco in 2022. Ondřej Adámek's works have been published by [Boosey & Hawkes](https://www.booseyandhawkes.com/) since 2022.

2023/24 season

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