

Philippe Manoury, Composer

Biography

Philippe Manoury is regarded as one of the most important French composers, in addition to being a researcher and forerunner in the field of live electronics. Despite in-depth training as a pianist and composer—he was instructed by Max Deutsch (a student of Schoenberg's) and Michel Philippot, among others—he considers himself to be self-taught. "The composition must be born from an inner longing, and requires no preconditions." Accordingly, he began his first compositional experiments on his own in parallel to his first lessons in music, and, at the age of 19, his works were already being performed at major festivals for new music. His breakthrough culminated with the premiere of his piano piece *Cryptophonos* in 1974, interpreted by Claude Helffer.

Following two years of teaching at Brazilian universities, his compositional interest in mathematical models brought Philippe Manoury to the Paris Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique (IRCAM). He worked there from 1981 together with the mathematician Miller Puckette on a programming language for interactive live electronics (very well-known today under the name MAX-MSP). Between 1987 and 1991, he composed *Sonus ex machina*, a cycle focusing on the real-time interaction between acoustic instruments and computer-generated sounds—a topic that continues to influence his artistic work and theoretical texts.

Alongside pieces for large orchestras such as *Sound and Fury*, the violin concerto *Synapse* (2009), and *Echo-Daimónon* for piano, electronics, and orchestra (2012), recent years have also seen the premieres of Philippe Manoury's string quartets (*Stringendo* and *Tensio*, both 2010; *Melencolia*, 2013; *Fragmenti*, 2016) and instrumental works with electronics (*Partita I* for viola, 2007; *Partita II* for violin, 2012; *Le temps, mode d'emploi* for two pianos, 2014). The moment of interaction characterises his approach—not only in smaller works or compositions featuring electronics, but also with large orchestras: he turns them into a sound laboratory where new interactive possibilities are tested, expanding music theatre as a form.

This increasingly includes the spatial arrangement of musicians in the concert hall, for example in his work *In situ*, awarded the Orchestral Prize in Donaueschingen in 2013. Inspired by François-Xavier Roth, who conducted the premiere, Philippe Manoury extended the composition into the *Köln Trilogie*, a large-scale spatial triptych for the Gürzenich Orchestra Cologne. After *Ring* (2016) and a repeat performance of *In situ* (2017), the trilogy was completed with *Lab.Oratorium* for two singers, two actors, vocal ensemble, choir, orchestra, and electronics, staged by Nicolas Stemmann and premiered in May 2019. The work, which is also an expression of the explicitly political commitment to humanity, folds texts by Ingeborg Bachmann, Hannah Arendt, and Georg Trakl into current events and was performed to wide acclaim in Cologne as well as at the Hamburg Elbphilharmonie and Paris Philharmonic. The composer had previously collaborated with director Nicolas Stemmann on the music theatre project *Kein Licht*, based on Elfriede Jelinek's text of the same name, which premiered at the RuhrTriennale 2017 with subsequent performances in Strasbourg, Paris, Zagreb, and Luxembourg.

Despite the pandemic, a number of new works were also heard in the past seasons. The 20/21 season began with the world premiere of a fanfare for brass for the Gürzenich Orchestra Cologne. As part of a focus on Philippe Manoury at the Casa da Música, two concerts were realised under Peter Rundel; the *Passacaglia pour Tokyo* with the Remix Ensemble (piano: Nicolas Hodges) and *B-Partita* (violin: Ashot Sargsyan) were performed. This was followed by the world premieres of the *Kein Licht Suite* at the Philharmonie Luxembourg, written for the Lucilin Ensemble and mezzo-soprano Christina Daletska, and the concerto for piano and ensemble *Mouvements*, interpreted by Ancuza Aprodu and the Ensemble Orchestral Contemporain under Bruno Mantovani as part of Festival Messiaen. In September 2021, Daniel Barenboim launched *Das wohlpräparierte Klavier*, a large piece for piano and live electronics, at the season opening of the Boulez Saal in Berlin, followed by the world premiere of *Argumenta* for two percussionists at the Festival Offbeat in Copenhagen.

In June 2022, Philippe Manoury celebrated his 70th birthday, which was honoured with numerous concerts throughout the year. Among the many events, the Paris Percussion Group performed *Silex* for twelve percussionists at the Auditorium de Radio France in May. Philippe Manoury's *13 Bagatelles*, composed for the pianist Martin von der Heydt, were also heard for the first time in October at the NOW! festival in Essen. In December, two premieres were on the programme of a concert at the Philharmonie de Paris with the Ensemble intercontemporain under François-Xavier Roth: in addition to the censemble

concerto *Grammaires du sonore*, *Vier Lieder (aus Kein Licht)* as well as *Fragments pour un portrait* were performed together with mezzo-soprano Christina Daletka.

The 2023/24 season is marked by the completion of the orchestral triptych, whose opening work *Anticipations* was premiered in autumn 2022 with the Orquestra Sinfónica do Porto Casa da Música under Baldur Brönnimann. First performances of the work followed in March in Paris with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France and in August 2023 with the Tonkünstler Orchestra under Brad Lubman at the Grafenegg Festival, where Philippe Manoury was composer-in-residence. A second, shorter part of the triptych entitled *Rémanences-Palimpseste* will be heard in December 2023 with the SWR Symphony Orchestra under Teodor Currentzis in Stuttgart and at the Philharmonie Berlin as part of a project around Mahler's 10th Symphony. The final work, *Présences*, will be performed in August 2024 at the Suntory Hall Summer Festival, where Philippe Manoury is artist-in-residence; the French premiere with the Orchestre National de France is planned for the 2024/25 season.

Philippe Manoury has held various teaching and artistic positions, including at Ensemble intercontemporain (1983-1987), Conservatoire de Lyon (1987-1997), Orchestre de Paris (1995-2001), Festival d'Aix-en-Provence (1998-2000), and the Scène nationale d'Orléans (2001-2003). He is professor emeritus of the University of California San Diego where he taught composition from 2004 to 2012. In 2013, he returned to his native France where he was named Professor of Composition at the Académie Supérieure de la Haute École des Arts du Rhin in Strasbourg. His own academy for young composers took place from 2015 to 2018 as part of the Musica Festival in Strasbourg. Following an invitation from the Collège de France, in 2017 he was also given the "Chaire Annuelle de Création Artistique." In the 2022/23 season he will be a jury member of the Luciano Berio International Composition at the Accademia di Santa Cecilia.

Philippe Manoury has received numerous awards for his work. In 2014, he was named Officier des Arts et des Lettres by the French Ministry of Culture. Philippe Manoury is a member of the honorary committee of the French-German Fund for Contemporary Music/Impuls Neue Musik. In summer 2015, he was elected as a member of the Berlin Akademie der Künste.

Philippe Manoury's works are published by Universal/Editions Durand. A collection of texts by and about the composer can be found on his blog at www.philippemanoury.com.

2023/2024 season

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