

Stefano Gervasoni, Composer

Biography

The music of composer Stefano Gervasoni, born in Bergamo in 1962, is characterised by a refined and highly personal sound world in which elusive lyricism, formal clarity and subtle processes of transformation coexist. The voice occupies a central place in his catalogue, whether in solo, choral, theatrical and instrumental contexts, or in orchestral works. Chamber music also plays a particularly significant role in his oeuvre: he approaches it as a laboratory for the exploration of timbre, polyphonic structure and formal principles, as well as a space for poetic and expressive exploration, in which sound becomes a medium for reflection, dialogue and invention.

His writing often establishes a complex relationship with memory and reference. Allusions to jazz in *Godspell* (2002), to Girolamo Frescobaldi in *Six lettres sur l'obscurité* (2005–06), to fado in *Com que voz* (2008), and to both art music and popular traditions in the opera *Limbus-Limbo* (2012), are gradually encoded, displaced and transfigured into a language aiming at the pure expression of highly emotional states. This poetic research finds some of its most significant outcomes in works such as *Dir - in dir* (2003–10), written for the EXAUDI Vocal Ensemble and the Ensemble L'Instant Donné; *Heur, leurre, lueur* (2013) for cello and orchestra; *Clamour* (2014–15), written for the Quatuor Diotima; *In die Luft geschrieben* (2017–18) for mezzo-soprano, percussion, harp, celesta and string orchestra, written for the Munich Chamber Orchestra; *Eufonique* (2016/17–2020), written for the Ensemble intercontemporain; *De Tinieblas* (2019–20), written for the SWR Vocal Ensemble and IRCAM, and *In nomine PPP* (2022), a cantata for eight voices and sixteen musicians after Pier Paolo Pasolini, written for the Company of Music and the Ensemble PHACE.

More recent works include the Piano Sonata (2024–25) for Filippo Gorini, and the violin concerto *Tacet* (2024–25) for Patricia Kopatchinskaja, who premiered the work with the Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI under the baton of Maxime Pascal and who will present the French premiere in June 2026 at the ManiFeste Festival with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France under the baton of Pierre Bleuse. At the festival, the conductor will also lead the Ensemble intercontemporain in a performance of *Fado Errático*, a composition written in 2015 based on fados by Amália Rodrigues. Plans for the coming season include the world premiere of *Rischiare la gioia* for mezzo-soprano, choir and orchestra, a commission by the orchestra and choir of the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia under the baton of Daniel Harding, based on texts by Pattiann Rogers, as well as a piano concerto for Filippo Gorini.

Stefano Gervasoni has received commissions from many of the leading institutions and ensembles in Europe, North America and Japan, including, in addition to those mentioned above, the Ensemble Modern, the Klangforum Wien, the Ensemble Contrechamps, the Divertimento Ensemble, the Casa da Música in Porto, MaerzMusik/Berliner Festspiele, the Wittener Tage für neue Kammermusik, WDR / Westdeutscher Rundfunk Cologne, SWR / Südwestrundfunk, the Teatro alla Scala, Suntory Hall in Tokyo, the Festival d'Automne à Paris and the Festival Milano Musica.

On the advice of Luigi Nono, Stefano Gervasoni began studying composition at the age of 18 and later trained at the Conservatorio Giuseppe Verdi in Milan under Luca Lombardi, Niccolò Castiglioni and Azio Corghi. Encounters with Brian Ferneyhough, Peter Eötvös, Helmut Lachenmann, Gérard Grisey and Heinz Holliger proved decisive for his artistic development. Following a study visit with György Ligeti in Hungary in 1990, he completed his training in Paris at IRCAM, where he attended the course in composition and computer music in 1992.

Recordings of Stefano Gervasoni's music have been released on labels such as Aeon, Harmonia Mundi, hatHut, KAIROS, Naïve, Sony, Stradivarius and Winter & Winter. The musicologist Philippe Albèra dedicated a comprehensive monograph to him, published in 2015, entitled *Stefano Gervasoni. Le parti pris des sons*. His work has been recognised with numerous awards, including the Prix de Rome (1995-96), the DAAD Artist Fellowship in Berlin (2006), the Serge Koussevitzky Music Foundation Prize (2018), the 'Coups de Cœur' from the Académie Charles Cros, and the Premio Abbiati, which he received in 2009, 2022 and 2025, most recently for the recording of *De Tinieblas*. Since 2006, he has been Professor of Composition at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris.

His works are published by Ricordi, with part of the catalogue also associated with Suvini Zerboni / SZ Sugar.

<https://www.stefanogervasoni.net>

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