

LONG BIOGRAPHY 2025

For over three decades, Athens-born composer, conductor and university professor **Konstantia Gourzi** has been shaping contemporary music with her distinctive musical language. Her works radiate an inner luminosity – emerging from silence and centeredness, they unfold a dramatic intensity that never strives for volume, but rather for depth.

For Gourzi, composition and conducting are inseparably linked forms of expression – a mutual enrichment that has always inspired and defined her work.

Her music opens up spaces for reflection and emotional depth – often with reduced instrumentation, it unfolds a haunting effect. Her compositions strike an impressive balance between complexity and clarity, between inner strength and poetic restraint.

Gourzi's repertoire includes works for orchestra, chamber ensemble, solo instruments, music theatre and film. This often creates sonic landscapes that feel like journeys through multiple levels of perception. In her compositions, she frequently explores timeless themes – social issues, spiritual impulses, and the human connection to nature. She feels a deep inner calling to transform these themes through the unique energy of music.

Her musical training began in Athens with piano, composition, and conducting, and continued at what is now the Berlin University of the Arts. Her close collaboration with György Kurtág between 1991 and 1996 was especially formative. She also received significant inspiration from Isang Yun, Hans Werner Henze, Sofia Gubaidulina, Péter Eötvös, Aribert Reimann, and Iannis Xenakis. As a conductor, she was deeply influenced by Claudio Abbado (whom she assisted with the Berlin Philharmonic in 1995), Carlos Kleiber, Giuseppe Sinopoli, Günter Wand, Sylvia Caduff, and Michael Gielen.

Since 1991, she has founded and led various ensembles, including the Ensemble *attacca berlin*, the *Echo Ensemble*, the *ensemble oktopus*, and the network and ensemble *opus21musikplus*. From 1999 to 2007, she headed the Department of New Music at the Hanns Eisler Academy of Music in Berlin; since 2002, she has been professor of ensemble conducting for new music at the University of Music and Performing Arts Munich.

Numerous institutions, festivals and orchestras have commissioned works from her, including the ARD Music Competition, the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra, the BBC, the Bavarian State Opera, the Venice Biennale, the Lucerne Festival, the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Festival, the Kreisau Festival, the Grafenegg Festival, the Tonkünstler Orchestra, the Berlin State Opera, the Athens State Orchestra, the Bach Choir Salzburg, among many others.

Konstantia Gourzi regularly composes for international renowned soloists such as Nils Mönkemeyer, François Leleux, Cathy Krier, Dorothee Oberlinger, Julian Prégardien, Mikael Rudolfsson, Elisabeth Plank, Danae and Kiveli Dörken, Anastasia Kobekina, and William Youn, as well as for renowned ensembles including the Minguet Quartet, the Auner Quartet, the Cuarteto Quiroga, Klangforum Wien, the Munich Opera Horns, OPERcussion, the Feininger Trio, and the Meitar Ensemble.

Her extensive discography of over 30 releases has appeared on ECM, GENUIN, NEOS and Sony Classical, among others. Many of her albums have been nominated for the German Record Critics' Award and the International Classical Music Awards. Several new recordings of her works were released in 2023 and 2024. In 2023, Konstantia Gourzi was awarded the

Opus Klassik as 'Composer of the Year' . Her album 'Whispers' has already reached more than 50 million listeners on social media, and this number continues to grow steadily.

A central concern in her work is building bridges between cultures – through the interplay of different musical traditions, she seeks to open paths toward more conscious and respectful coexistence. She brings this vision to life in interdisciplinary performance formats, collaborating with musicians from around world, visual artists, and dancers – and bringing new music into unconventional spaces. Supporting young artists is also a deeply personal mission of hers.

In recent years, as a composer, conductor and educator, she has focused on special projects - often in the context of composer/ artist-in-residence programmes. She has contributed to festivals such as Grafenegg, Kreisau, Molyvos, Ultraschall Berlin and worked with the Duisburg Philharmonic Orchestra (for the Eigenzeit Festival). She has curated projects at the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Festival and designed her own portrait concerts. Recent highly acclaimed performances include collaborations with Camerata Salzburg, the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra (Canada), and the DSO Berlin.

In the 2025/2026 season, Konstantia Gourzi will be composer in residence with the Bremen Philharmonic Orchestra. The Mainz Philharmonic State Orchestra will dedicate its 2026 composer portrait to her. This will include numerous world premieres, orchestral and chamber music concerts, and educational programmes. Concerts are also planned at the Vienna Konzerthaus and at several festivals.

Another major focus of her current work, with her Munich-based *ensemble oktopus* – now in its 20th year – is the continuous development of interdisciplinary concert formats that open new paths of musical communication and experience.

Dr. Susanna Schulz, September 2025