

Konstantia Gourzi

COMPOSER • CONDUCTOR

LONG BIOGRAPHY

Konstantia Gourzi, “Opus Klassik” award-winner as a Composer of the Year in 2023, has enriched contemporary music in a unique way for more than 30 years as a composer, conductor and university professor with her world-exploring sound cosmos and authentic language. She sees composing and conducting as an inseparable relationship that is mutually beneficial. In Konstantia Gourzi's music, one experiences an inner glow and a great dramatic power that does not shout but comes from silence and centering. Her poignant music, which invites reflection, often creates a great effect with just a few instruments. In many of her works, she creates a touching juxtaposition of complexity and simplicity that gets right under your skin.

Konstantia Gourzi's compositional work includes works for orchestra, chamber ensemble and solo pieces as well as works for music theater and film music. Through these, she opens up unique, authentic sound journeys for the listener - an exploration of worlds of perception through music. Gourzi repeatedly engages with social challenges and timeless natural themes: she feels an inner urge to transform these themes through the unique energy of music.

Konstantia Gourzi studied piano, composition and conducting in her home city of Athens and at the Berlin University of the Arts (UdK). She was influenced by composers such as György Kurtág, with whom she worked closely from 1991 to 1996, Isang Yun, Hans Werner Henze, Sofia Gubaidulina, Péter Eötvös, Aribert Reimann and Iannis Xenakis, and as well as by conductors, such as Claudio Abbado, whom she assisted with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra in 1995, Carlos Kleiber, Giuseppe Sinopoli, Günter Wand, Sylvia Caduff and Michael Gielen.

Since 1991, Konstantia Gourzi has founded and directed various ensembles, including the ensemble *attacca berlin*, the *Echo Ensemble*, the *ensemble oktopus* and the network and ensemble *opus21musikplus*. From 1999 to 2007, she was ensemble director of New Music at the Hanns Eisler Academy of Music in Berlin, and since 2002 she has held a professorship in the same position at the Academy of Music and Theater in Munich.

In recent years, Konstantia Gourzi's commissions have included the ARD Music Competition, the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra, the BBC, the Bavarian State Opera, the Venice Biennale, the Grafenegg and Kreisau Festivals, the Lucerne Festival, the Bachchor Salzburg, the Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, the Molyvos International Music Festival, the Berlin State Opera and the Tonkünstler Orchestra. She composes for soloists such as Nils Mönkemeyer, Francois Leleux, Dorothee Oberlinger, Julian Prégardien, Danae and Kiveli Dörken and William Youn; as well as for ensembles such as the Minguet Quartet, the Auner Quartet, the Munich Opera Horns, OPERcussion, the Feininger Trio and the Meitar Ensemble.

Her discography includes more than 30 recordings, including the labels ECM, GENUIN, NEOS and Sony Classical. Several albums with her music have been nominated for the International Classical Music Awards and the German Record Critics' Award. Several recordings and albums with music by Konstantia Gourzi were released in 2023 and 2024.

The pressing desire to create, through the fusion of different musical traditions, connection and respectful coexistence between people from different cultural backgrounds, also constantly inspires Konstantia Gourzi to develop new performance concepts. She regularly collaborates with musicians from other regions of the world as well as with visual artists and dancers and

brings new music to unusual performance venues. She is also passionately committed to promoting young talents.

As a conductor, she has been focusing on developing special projects in recent years. As "Composer and Conductor in Residence", for example, she curated and conducted innovative formats for the Eigenzeit Festival with the Duisburg Philharmonic Orchestra in 2023 and led the transcultural "Call for Compositions". In 2024, she was commissioned by the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Festival to compose the overture for the opening concert with the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra. She also presented her program "Connections: 35 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall" as conductor and composer with *opus21musikplus*. She curated a musical kaleidoscope on the theme of "Goddesses of Fate" for the Bachchor Salzburg, which she also composed and conducted. At the end of the 2024 season, Konstantia Gourzi was presented to an enthusiastic audience with a portrait concert at the Gezeitenkonzerte.

In the 2024/25 season, numerous premieres by Konstantia Gourzi will be performed in various countries, including "The Encounter" with trombonist Mikael Rudolfsson in Costa Rica, "Voyager 1" and the Eternum Saxophone Quartet in Austria and "Atlantis 2" with harpist Elisabeth Plank in Portugal. The premiere of "Saâ" with the Camerata Salzburg and recorder player Dorothee Oberlinger will also take place in Austria in January. This will be followed in Canada by the premiere of "Ypsilon, A Poem for Trumpet and Orchestra in Five Scenes" with trumpeter Simon Höfele under the direction of Daniel Raikin and the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra. In Germany, the work will be premiered in Stuttgart in March.

Gourzi's orchestral work "Mykene" will also be performed at the Ultraschall Festival with the DSO Orchestra Berlin under Anna Skryleva. As a conductor, Konstantia Gourzi will perform her works "Variation 21" and "Mondaufgang am Meer" with the Bremen Philharmonic Orchestra in the new season. Her work "Apollon" will be performed for the first time in Austria with Johannes Fleischmann's "THE TRIO". She also continues to work on new compositions and performs interdisciplinary new concert formats with her Munich *ensemble oktopus*.

Dr. Susanna Schulz, July 2024