

IN THE DISTANCE

TURNING POINT ENSEMBLE

with Berislav Šipuš, conductor

April 29, 2022, at 7:30 p.m.

SFU Fei and Milton Wong Experimental Theatre

*Co-presented with SFU Woodward's Cultural Programs

Self-Fulfilling Prophecies (2016)

Srdan Dedić

in five movements

La Frontera (soprano and ensemble) (2006)

Marko Ruždjak

Robyn Driedger-Klassen, soprano

Abyss (2016)

Krešimir Seletković

– INTERMISSION –

Silazak Na VRH (2006) – Descending on the Top

Stanko Horvat

in eight movements

Robyn Driedger-Klassen, soprano

In Der Ferne (2015)

Berislav Šipuš

in three movements

In the Distance

Music from Croatia

Turning Point Ensemble's relationship with the contemporary Croatian music scene started in 2017, with the Canadian premiere of Sanda Majurec (1971) *Contratempo I, II & III* featuring the exceptional percussionist, Julia Chien.

In 2019, TPE embarked on a unique project – the artistic exchange with the Croatian contemporary music ensemble, *Cantus Ensemble*, established by Berislav Šipuš, our guest conductor tonight. Cantus Ensemble was established in 2001 and TPE in 2002. Both ensembles have similar artistic missions and instrumentation setup.

Imagined as a multiyear-multistage collaboration, our project started in the Fall of 2019 with a conductor's exchange. Owen Underhill conducted Cantus Ensemble in Zagreb with works by D. Chang, E. Top, J. Oliver and O. Underhill and Ariel Barnes as a soloist. Due to COVID-19, we had to postpone the concert of Croatian music to this year and are pleased to present Berislav Šipuš conducting works by Croatian composers. During COVID, in Fall 2021, the Music Biennale in Zagreb, featured TPE digitally and this was well received.

About Croatian contemporary music

The period between WWI and WWII in Croatian music was marked by a return to the national direction (announced in 1916 with the premiere of works by six composers – one of them was Dora Pejačević, representing the Fin de siècle. Dora was the first Croatian woman composer to write orchestral works). Intensive nurturing of popular and jazz music also begins in this period (the first jazz band dates from 1923).

Composers of note between 1920-1960 (to mention a few) were Blagoje Bersa (brilliant orchestrator!), Krešimir Baranović, Jakov Gotovac, Josip Štolcer Slavenski, Boris Papandopulo, Bruno Bjelinski, Stjepan Šulek and Milo Cipra.

Croatian music in the second half of the 20th century developed into multiple directions. In the first post-war decades, the thematic focus was on the tradition of the National Liberation War and post-war reconstruction with considerable reliance on ideologically related poetry and corresponding forms (mass songs and choirs, cantatas, and large musical and stage productions.)

At the same time, the coexistence of national and cosmopolitan stylistic-expressive and thematic orientations continued. Thus, neoclassicism, post romanticism and folklore influences are found in orchestral, concert, chamber, piano and instrumental as well as vocal-instrumental and scenic works.

Stjepan Šulek (1914-1986) (trombonists will recognize his Trombone Sonata “Vox Gabrieli”) significantly raised the craft level of composition in Croatia. A distinguished professor of musical composition, he mentored many leading Croatian composers including Milko Kelemen, later a founder of Music Biennale Zagreb (founded in 1961), Stanko Horvat, composer, educator and for many years Artistic Director of Music Biennale, Krešimir Šipus, Pavle Dešpalj, Dubravko Detoni, and Igor Kuljerić.

Post-WWII composition tendencies, the so-called “new sound”, gained the favor of a significant part of Croatian composers, especially from the younger generation. It was manifested by accepting and applying dodecaphony, atonality and polytonality, principles of concrete music, inclination towards electronically produced sounds, chance music, creation of cybernetic and synthetic music, introduction of principles of total organization into the creative process and inevitable experimentation with advanced technologies.

Each of the distinct protagonists of new ideological and stylistic features of the music thus created (Ivo Malec, Milko Kelemen, Silvio Foretić, Ruben Radica, Stanko Horvat, Davorin Kempf, Igor Kuljerić, Frano Parać, etc.) is characterized by unique, individual approaches to selection and application of new musical languages.

We should also note here the teacher-mentor relations: Olivier Messiaen -> Kelemen and Radica; Pierre Schaeffer-> Malec, Ruždjak; René Leibowitz -> Horvat.

Ivo Malec (1925-2019) studied with Milo Cipra; he later met Pierre Schaeffer whom he considers his 'true and only master'. Malec taught composition at the Paris Conservatoire from 1972 to 1990.

Cipra was also Marko Ruždjak's teacher.

Kelemen, Malec, Horvat and Kempf further pursued careers as composition mentors.

Kelemen was Professor for Composition at the State High School for Music and Performing Arts Stuttgart. His students were (to mention a few): Silvio Foretić, Marko Ruždjak, O.G. Blarr, Adriana Hölszky, D.Reith, G. Sollima, Mia Schmidt and N. J. Živković.

Malec taught composers such as Marko Ruzdjak, Edith Canat de Chizy, D. Dufour, Ph. Hurel, Ph. Leroux and G. Pesson.

Stanko Horvat brought up prominent Croatian composers Frano Parać, Ivo Josipović, Sanda Majurec, Srdjan Dedić and Berislav Šipuš. Seletković studied also with D. Kempf.

This trend continues with the generation of composers presented tonight. Šipuš, Dedić and Seletković are educating new generations of composers in Croatia.

Enjoy!

Dubravko Pajalic

President of the Board, Turning Point Ensemble

Berislav Šipuš, conductor

Berislav Šipuš (Zagreb, 1958) studied art history and composition. He graduated in composition from Music Academy, under Stanko Horvat, in 1987, and continued further training under Gilbert Bosco in Udine, as well as under François Bernard Mâche and Iannis Xenakis at the UPIC in Paris. He attended conducting courses held by Vladimir Kranjčević, Željko Brkanović and Krešimir Šipuš in Zagreb, as well as Milan Horvat at the Hochschule für Musik und darstellende Kunst in Graz.

Šipuš worked as an assistant-pianist at the Croatian National Theatre Ballet, and the Bermuda Civic Ballet, taught theory at the Elly Bašić Music School in Zagreb and worked as a producer at the Vatroslav Lisinski Concert Hall.

Šipuš was the managing director of the Zagreb Philharmonic Orchestra (2001-2005). He was a producer of the Music Biennale Zagreb and its artistic director from 1997 until 2011. He lived in Milan, working at the Teatro alla Scala as a rehearsal coach, then orchestra conductor, for ballet productions, and pianist, rehearsal coach and conducting assistant in the opera. He is a full professor at the Zagreb Academy of Music.

For his compositions, Šipuš received a number of prizes, among which are the Seven Secretaries of SKOJ Award and the Josip Štolcer Slavenski Award. Among the most recent works from his rich oeuvre are the Sinfonia Concertante for violin and orchestra, The Last Intermezzo, an opera, and Pasija (Passion), for choir and soloists. In 2004, he was decorated with the medal of the Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of France. In December 2011 he was appointed Deputy Minister of Culture and from April 2015 until January 2016 he was the Minister of Culture of the Republic of Croatia.

About *In Der Ferne*

When reading a book, I came across this little episode, "... on a sunny morning, a great Traveler arrived on the shore of a lake ... over troubled water, IN THE DISTANCE, on the horizon, he saw crystal clear high mountains of the unfathomable, unexplored, and mysterious massif Soffianna ... pondering for a moment, the great Traveler decided to go across the lake toward the distant peaks of those seductive mountains..." Music in this composition sings and speaks of 'the distance'...

Robyn Driedger-Klassen

Robyn Driedger-Klassen has been seen on many recital, concert and opera stages. Known particularly for her zeal for contemporary music, she performs and premieres many fascinating works by contemporary composers.

Performances this season include recitals of the songs of female composers, Luciano Berio's The Cries of London, Mozart's Requiem, Strauss' Vier Letzte Lieder, and a film production with City Opera Vancouver of Jake Heggie's monodrama, At the Statue of Venus (available on YouTube).

Robyn is Head of Voice at the Vancouver Academy of Music where she teaches students of all ages. She gives unsolicited reading recommendations to one and all and her garden becomes more epic with each passing year. She lives with her husband and two vocal critics under the age of ten. In recent times, Robyn has learned a considerable amount about black holes and superheroes and is expert at avoiding Lego underfoot.

Srdan Dedić, composer

Composer and pedagogue Srđan Dedić (Zagreb, 1965) graduated in composition in 1989 at the Music Academy in Zagreb with Stanko Horvat. He studied composition with François-Bernard Mâche in Strasbourg (1990-1991), with Geert van Keulen in Amsterdam (1991-1993) and with Joji Yuasa in Tokyo (1998-1999). Since 2005 he has been teaching at the Department of Composition and Music Theory of the Music Academy of the University of Zagreb.

Dedić's compositions have been presented in 26 countries on five continents with distinguished orchestras and performers such as the Brussels Philharmonic, The Louisville Orchestra, Korean Chamber Orchestra, Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra, RTV Slovenia Symphony Orchestra, Zagreb Philharmonic, Croatian HRT Symphony Orchestra, Dubrovnik Symphony Orchestra, Zagreb soloists, Cantus Ensemble, Aurelia Saxophone Quartet, Penderecki String Quartet, Quintet Slowind, Prague Brass Quintet, Ju Percussion Group, Pro Musica Nipponia, Zagreb Quartet and many other Croatian and international ensembles and soloists.

He has received numerous awards: first prize at the UNESCO's International Rostrum of Composers in Paris (1988), Music Biennale Zagreb Award (1989), Croatian Music Institute Award (1990), First prize at the 29th Indiana State University Contemporary Music Festival (1995), ISCM World Music Days jury selection for orchestral compositions; Korea (1997) and Belgium (2012), Josip Štolcer Slavenski award (2013), Boris Papandopulo Award of the Croatian Society of Composers (2017) and others.

His compositions have been published on 9 CDs and his scores have been released by DONEMUS (Amsterdam), PEERMUSIC (New York, Hamburg) and CANTUS (Zagreb).

About *Self-Fulfilling Prophecies*

The composition is dedicated to the Croatian Cantus Ensemble and was commissioned by the Osor Musical Evenings in 2016 for the opening of the festival.

I am fascinated by the phenomenon of our own prediction and imagining of a certain goal having a positive impact on our actions, which is how prophecy becomes realized in the end. I have, therefore, taken the title for my composition from the term self-fulfilling prophecy that was coined by the American sociologist Robert K. Merton in 1948 for a related phenomenon. Each section of this work symbolically represents one prophecy.

The vast majority of the material in this composition has been generated and processed by the algorithms that I have been developing in the computer program MAX for many years now. Special attention is given to the algorithms that control the vertical relations of the tones. Each texture has its own homogenous harmonic colour which is accomplished by using a very small number of vertical pitch-class sets per texture. Alternating pitch-classes in different sections of the composition results in a contrast in their harmonic colours.

Marko Ruždjak, composer

Composer Marko Ruždjak (Zagreb, 1946 – 2012) was born in the family of the well-known singer and composer Vladimir Ruždjak. He obtained a degree in the clarinet from the Music Academy in Zagreb, where he also graduated in composition (1972), under Milo Cipra. Ruždjak did further studies in composition with Ivo Malec and Pierre Schaeffer in Paris and Milko Kelemen in Cologne. He was soon appointed professor of theoretical subject at the Music Academy in Zagreb, where he has been teaching composition, as a full professor, since 1990.

Marko Ruždjak was the publications editor at the Zagreb Concert Agency, where he later also managed the Music Information Centre. For his works, Ruždjak has received numerous prizes: The "Seven Secretaries" Prize, twice (for *Divertissement* and *Breviary*), the "JRT" Prize for Prospekti, the "Josip Štolcer Slavenski" Prize for Madrigal, and "Vladimir Nazor" for *Ubu*. He was also the recipient of the "Međugorje" (for *Lux Aeterna*) and "Boris Papandopulo" (Komos) awards. He received the "Porin" Croatian recording industry prize several times. Marko Ruždjak was a full fellow of the Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences, and a member of the World New Music Days 2011 jury.

Speaking about Ruždjak's opus, the musicologist Eva Sedak has said: "Even when he is composing for standard ensembles (...) Ruždjak's quite exceptional sensitivity for the colour of the musical tone, for its expressive potentials outside the stereotypical expressions, and for his ability to establish new formal structure – by systematization in a semiotic sense – which admittedly polemicizes with tradition although it never lies outside of its continuity, Ruždjak bears witness to his elementary creative position which, despite everything, does not relinquish the possibilities of the new aesthetics. Contemporary, in as much as we are willing and able to recognize and accept."

About *La Frontera*

I borrowed the textual-semantic elements ('inside' and 'outside') from the following poets: title - Gloria Anzaldúa, Chicana, 20th century; subtitle - Soror Juana de la Cruz, Criolla, 17th century; short quotes - Comtessa de Dia, Provence, 12. century, Emily Dickinson, American, 19th century Profeminism?

Yes, and something else. *La frontera* (in translation, perhaps more like a 'border zone' than a 'border') does not presuppose the affirmation of the border as an inviolable line but seeks to suggest possible options for overstepping.

Krešimir Seletković, composer

Krešimir Seletković (Slavonski Brod, 1974) graduated in composition from the Academy of Music in Zagreb, under Davorin Kempf. He continued with further studies at summer master classes, in Semmering and Radziejowice (1997), Darmstadt (1998), Szombathely and Grožnjan (1999). He is a full professor at the Zagreb Academy of Music, where he was also the associate dean for six years. From 2003 until 2012 he was the editor of the *Ars Croatica* series of musical scores, published by the Croatian Composers' Society. Seletković is also a recording producer and collaborates actively with the Croatian Radio and Television, as a music assistant for broadcasts, and music producer.

For the 2011 Music Biennale Zagreb festival, in coproduction with the Croatian National Theatre Zagreb, Seletković wrote a ballet, *Air*, which went on to have great success and won the Croatian Actors' Guild Award for the best ballet production of the year 2011. He is also the recipient of numerous other awards for his works, such as the Boris Papandopulo Award, Stjepan Šulek Award and Josip Štolcer Slavenski Award, as well as the Croatian recording industry prize, Porin. Seletković was the artistic director of the Music Biennale Zagreb from 2012 until 2018. He is currently the composer-in-residence of the Croatian Radio and Television. Krešimir Seletković is the author of about 60 works, which have been performed worldwide: orchestral, chamber, vocal and electronic music.

About *Abyss*

Ponor / Abyss is a composition inspired by the Cantus ensemble. Using compositional techniques based on the twelve-tone system, he questions the dimensions of the human spirit and personality with the atmosphere, trying to raise awareness of the unexplored and seemingly unattainable.

Stanko Horvat, composer

Stanko Horvat (1930 – 2006) studied composition at the Music Academy in Zagreb, with Stjepan Šulek, and continued his studies at the Paris Conservatory with Tony Aubin and privately with René Leibowitz. He later spent a research sabbatical in the Electronic Studio of the Berlin Technical University, on a DAAD scholarship. He was professor of composition at the Music Academy in Zagreb from 1961 to 1999 (and dean from 1977-1981), greatly influencing the same generations of students that are now forming Croatia's musical life. He was the president of the Croatian Composers' Society and was a regular member of the Croatian Arts and Sciences Academy since 1998. From 1985 to 1989 he was the director of the Music Biennale Zagreb.

“Horvat takes up a special place in Croatian music after the Second World War, a place merited by his peculiar relationship towards the traditional in music, always eavesdropping on it, in order to transplant it into his own notion of the ‘new sound’. He distanced himself from the avant-garde, saying he belonged among the composers who tread behind the avant-garde, those who question that which was already conquered, get accustomed to it, valorizing it, not as pure material, but as artistic, human and psychological factors.” [Nikša Gligo]

About *Silazak Na Vrh*

Silazak na vrh is a cycle to the verses of eight sonnets of Croatian poet Luko Paljetak from the sonnet crown of the same name. Horvat finished the cycle only in the version for piano and voice and made a start with the instrumentation, but his death prevented continuing after the second sonnet – the remainder has been orchestrated by Berislav Šipuš. Paljetak's verses are lapidary and concentrated, in other words, highly unsuited for certain composedly operations and changes. But Horvat nevertheless in the last, eight, poem combined the first four

lines of Sonnet 15 and the first verse of Sonnet 11. But the homogeneity of the poem is not impaired. On the contrary.

Below are the titles of each of the eight sonnets of Luko Paljetak:

- I. Tu tih... (Here, quietly....)
- II. Moj prah... (My dust...)
- III. Sve veći... (Bigger and bigger...)
- IV. Jest, u noći... (Yes, at night....)
- V. Dugo, nježno... (Long, gentle...)
- VI. Prsti na koži... (Fingers on the skin...)
- VII. Znam da su... (I know they are...)
- VIII. Sviramo... (We play music...)

Owen Underhill - Artistic Director of TPE

Owen Underhill is a Canadian composer and conductor who lives in Vancouver where he is Artistic Director of the Turning Point Ensemble and a faculty member in the School for the Contemporary Arts at Simon Fraser University. As a composer, Underhill writes for diverse combinations including orchestra, voice and choir, a wide variety of chamber music, and interdisciplinary and cross-cultural collaborations. Recent works include *Bee Studies* (with Vancouver poet Renée Sarojini Saklikar) and premiered by Dory Hayley and the Turning Point Ensemble in March 2019, *Gaudi Madrigals* composed for *musica intima*, and music for the Turning Point Ensemble and Wen Wei production *Flying White* premiered in February 2020.

As a conductor, Underhill has conducted over 300 premieres with organizations such as the Turning Point Ensemble, Cantus Ensemble (Croatia), CBC Radio Orchestra, National Arts Centre Orchestra and Vancouver Intercultural Orchestra.

Turning Point Ensemble

Founded in 2002 by its musician members, Turning Point Ensemble (TPE) is a large chamber ensemble (16 instrumentalists and conductor) with a mandate to increase the understanding and appreciation of music composed during the past hundred years. The ensemble has built a strong reputation for outstanding musicianship and linking seminal 20th century repertoire to contemporary works through thoughtful programming and innovative presentations. Uniquely and flexibly sized between a small chamber ensemble and a symphonic orchestra, TPE presentations offer a symphonic palette with a chamber music sensibility. In addition to its concerts, tours and recordings, the ensemble has regularly mounted innovative interdisciplinary productions including operas, and collaborations with dance, theatre, visual art and moving image.

Turning Point Ensemble has recorded seven CDs and one DVD on the Artifact, Centrediscs, Atma Classique, Redshift Record, Orlando, and Parma labels. We are proud to have presented a diverse range of repertoire, commissioned and performed works by Canadian and international composers, toured nationally and internationally, and partnered with several community and cultural organizations.

TPE Ensemble

Brenda Fedoruk, flute, piccolo, bass flute

David Owen, oboe, english horn

AK Coope, clarinet, bass clarinet

Ingrid Chiang, bassoon, contrabassoon

Laurel Spencer, french horn

Katherine Evans, trumpet

Jeremy Berkman, trombone

Drew Dumas, tuba

Janelle Nadeau, harp

Jane Hayes, piano

Jonathan Bernard, percussion

Martin Fisk, percussion II

Mary Sokol Brown, violin

Domagoj Ivanovic, violin

Sarah Kwok, viola

Isidora Nojkovic, cello

David G Brown, double bass

TPE Staff

Artistic Director – Owen Underhill

Director of Outreach – Jeremy Berkman

General Manager – Aniria Sanz

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Maggie Quirk – Vice-President

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Collide Entertainment

Dubravko Pajalic

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