

VENICE MUSIC BIENNALE ANNOUNCES 2021 PROGRAMME, 'CHORUSES', SEPTEMBER 17-26.

Apr 15, 2021 | News | 0 comments

Lucia Ronchetti. Photo credit: Vanessa Francia

FIRST MUSIC BIENNALE UNDER ARTISTIC DIRECTOR LUCIA RONCHETTI

FIFTEEN WORLD PREMIERES TO BE GIVEN

KAIJA SAARIAHO RECEIVES GOLDEN LION LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

The programme for the 2021 Venice Music Biennale, one of the six Biennale di Venezia that showcase the best in contemporary Architecture, Art, Dance, Film, Music and Theatre, has been announced by Artistic Director Lucia Ronchetti. For her first Biennale as Artistic Director the Italian composer is presenting 15 world premieres over 10 days of performances across Venice under the heading of 'Choruses.'

'Choruses' will focus on contemporary choral writing through performances of new commissions and some of the most important works of the last 50 years that explore the human voice. The Venice Music Biennale 2021 is fostering a dialogue between the Venetian past and the present, and the possible renaissance of vocal polyphony through performances from major Venetian organisations across the city.

The 65th Music Biennale will welcome major European vocal and choral ensembles such as Theatre of Voices from Copenhagen, Neue Vocalsolisten from Stuttgart, Accentus choir from Paris, vocal ensemble Sequenza 9.3 from Paris and SWR Vokalensemble from Stuttgart, as well as the renowned historical Venetian choirs the Cappella Marciana di San Marco and the choir of the Teatro La Fenice.

The Festival will open at the Teatro La Fenice with a performance of *Oltra mar* for choir and orchestra by Kaija Saariaho, winner of the Golden Lion for Music, whose chamber work *Only the sound remains* will also be presented at the Teatro Malibran. The Neue Vocalsolisten Stuttgart, Silver Lion for Music, will be present throughout the festival with world premieres, the production of monumental vocal works and as tutors of the College Biennale Musica.

The festival will present three commissions of the Venice Music Biennale. Marta Gentilucci, has been commissioned to write a work for four reciting voices and mixed choir. Another is a new composition for voices recorded in the Basilica di San Marco by the German sound-artist Christina Kubisch, in collaboration with the Cappella Marciana of the Basilica di San Marco conducted by Marco Gemmani. The third commission is for a new work by the African-American composer George Lewis. His new composition for the Neue Vocalsolisten and live electronics is dedicated to the legendary figure of the first philosopher of African origin, Anthony William Amo, who lived in the 18th century and was a professor at the universities of Halle and Jena.

Other world premieres being given during the Festival include *Reconnaissance* by Kaija Saariaho (commissioned by the Accentus Choir); a new work of vocal dramaturgy by Sergej Newsky (commissioned by the Neue Vocalsolisten); a work by Israeli composer Sivan Eldar for the Accentus Choir and a new choral work by Francesco Filidei on a text by Nanni Balestrini commissioned by the SWR Vokalensemble.

Other important and representative works for choir and vocal ensemble are by renowned composers such as George Aperghis, David Lang, Sylvano Bussotti, Luca Francesconi, Samir Odeh-Tamimi, Morton Feldman, Arvo Pärt, Hans Abrahamsen and Valentin Silvestrov.

Four concerts for solo voice presented by renowned vocalists and vocal performers will contribute to a broader view of contemporary vocality. The concerts will feature the charismatic Egyptian producer and DJ Ahmed Zuli, the Albanian vocalist Elina Duni, the renowned Dublin-based vocalist and composer Jennifer Walshe and Swiss-Ghanaian composer and vocalist Joy Frempong.

The festival programme includes various theoretical events linked to vocal production, including a conference by Gianmario Borio, director of the Giorgio Cini Foundation Institute of Music, Kaija Saariaho in conversation with critic and broadcaster Tom Service, as well as a meeting between the Neue Vocalsolisten and Björn Gottstein, artistic director of the Donaueschinger Musiktage. Several meetings on vocal writing with the invited composers are planned at the Conservatorio di Venezia "Benedetto Marcello".

Lucia Ronchetti is one of the leading Italian composers working today who is especially celebrated for her vocal works. On April 30, the final concert dedicated to four of Ronchetti's works will be streamed to celebrate the

conclusion of her visiting professorship of composition at Frankfurt's Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst. On June 27 the Oper Frankfurt will premiere Ronchetti's opera *Inferno* and 2021 also sees the Staatsoper Unter den Linden in Berlin produce her chamber opera *Pinocchio's Abenteuer*, which also receives a new production at Oper Frankfurt. A new opera project will also be created at the Deutsche Oper am Rhein, Düsseldorf.