

Sappho's Legacy (2013), 45'

L'Itinéraire, Musicatreize, proxima Centauri and twelve choirs

The theme of Jesper Nordin's work "Sappho's Legacy" is an exposé of the heritage of Sappho. Apart from writing fantastic poems that has been read, dramatized and set to music over the millennia she has other parts of her heritage that are almost equally as important and that has been included in this work. For example she was probably the first known female author, at least in the west. It is also due to her living on the island of Lesbos that we have the term Lesbian.

The lyrics in this piece are about revolt, love, vulnerability, strength and spirituality. We are faced by a myriad of different texts from female authors through-out the centuries, from the present day back to the time of Sappho around 500 BC. We hear texts by Pussy Riot from Russia, Märta Tikkanen from Finland, Karin Boye from Sweden, Charlotte Perkins Gilman from USA, Hildegard von Bingen from Germany and finally Sappho herself from ancient Greece.

The music takes its influences from as many places as the text and the result is a piece large in scope and with a myriad of facets. Jesper Nordin uses his background in rock music and Swedish folk music as well as his studies in musicology and his base as a successful contemporary composer, and puts it all to use in this piece.

Sappho's Legacy was commissioned as a Commande de l'Etat from the French Ministry of Culture and premiered at the Marseille Opera during Marseille's year as Cultural Capitol of Europe. It was later also performed at the Opera of Bordeaux.



Jesper Nordin (b. 1971)

Jesper Nordin is a leading Swedish composer who has garnered considerable international acclaim in recent years. His music, with its powerful emotional impact and traces of traditional Swedish folk music, rock music and improvised music, is broadcast and performed throughout the world.

His music is performed by conductors like Esa-Pekka Salonen, Daniel Harding and Kent Nagano and soloists like Martin Fröst, Diego Tosi and Jean Geoffroy. His orchestral pieces have been played and/or commissioned by orchestras as the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Sinfonieorchester Basel, Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, St Paul Chamber Orchestra and the Swedish and Finnish radio orchestras. In 2014 the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra highlighted the music of Jesper Nordin during a four day portrait festival. He was composer-in-residence for Swedish Radio's serious music station (P2) between 2004 and 2006.

He is also included in the repertoires of several of the world's foremost contemporary music ensembles, amongst them ensemble recherche, L'Itinéraire and Quatuor Diotima. He has received commissions from major institutions in Europe, including IRCAM, Radio France, Le Fresnoy, the French Ministry of Culture as well as several Art Councils and radio stations in Europe and North America. His music has been performed at numerous festivals, including Verbier Festival, ManiFeste, Wittener Tage für Neue Kammermusik, ISCM, Musiques en Scène, and Huddersfield. In 2010 he received the Grand Christ Johnson Prize for being "a sound magician, who explores and expands the acoustic space with originality and an uncompromising curiosity" (Royal Swedish Academy of Music).

Nordin studied at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm with Pär Lindgren, Bent Sørensen and William Brunson, before taking further studies at IRCAM with Philippe Leroux and others. He subsequently was invited to be a Visiting Scholar at Stanford University, where he studied with Brian Ferneyhough and worked in the CCRMA studio.

Jesper Nordin has also had huge success with his iOS apps Gestruent and ScaleGen that are based on his own composition technique.

For more info see www.jespernordin.com and www.gestruent.com