

Undercurrents (2006), 16'

Cello, ensemble & live electronics

Commissioned as a Commande d'Etat by the French Ministry of Culture and premiered by Benjamin Carat and Ensemble Orchestral Contemporain, conducted by Arie van Beek. The electronics was developed at GRAME in Lyon. Most art is dealing with undercurrents, whether in the artists mind during the process of creation, or in the moment of reception by the audience that seldom (if ever) have the time, possibility or interest in seeing all the layers and parts of the work. I find this concept fascinating since I also work a lot with improvisation - both in my compositions and in different ensembles - where the undercurrents of mind and sound become even more important. In this piece I have tried to make some of these underlying aspects clear for myself. The undercurrents in this piece includes for example music that is heard only by the musicians (before or during the piece) and that they react to in different ways. In other parts the currents are the different ways sound flows through the ensemble - one instrument can control the amount of amplification of another which in its turn is sent to affect a third instrument. The conscious work with undercurrents also includes the compositional process, where sometimes an entire section is built around an idea or another piece of music which is then taken away completely. In my music a lot of the underlying inspiration comes from other genres - traditional Swedish folk musik, rock music of different kinds, improvised music - as well as from the classical and contemporary tradition. All of this is present in this piece as well, both in some of the undercurrents I described earlier and sometimes in the actual sound of the piece.



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'Itineraire 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 Gestrument and ScaleGen that are based on his own composition technique.

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