

PASCAL DUSAPIN

There are many questions hidden within Pascal Dusapin's music. Each listener will recognise the echoes of their own questions and the answers concealed in his writing. This uniquely organic music with its multiple facets – in turn volcanic, indescribable, rough, thoughtful, vital, and stubborn – provokes a wide variety of feelings in its listener. As the music moves from deep sadness to a cascade of triumphant laughter, from shrill fright to a fabulous avalanche that turns into a debonair fanfare, it fearlessly embraces every level of emotion.

Pascal Dusapin, born on May 29, 1955 in Nancy, was introduced to music at an early age. After hearing a jazz trio while on vacation with his family, he returned home with a longing to learn the clarinet. His father, however, insisted on piano lessons. When he was 10, Dusapin discovered the organ, an overwhelming passion that would carry him through his chaotic and unconventional adolescence. Growing up part time in a small village in the Lorraine and part time in a Parisian suburb, he embraced all genres with equal fervour, as enthusiastic about Bach as about the Doors, loving free jazz as much as Beethoven. But when he first heard *Arcana* by Edgar Varese at the University of Vincennes when he was 18, his life was transformed. From that moment, he knew that he would devote all of his time and energy to composition. From 1974 to 1978, he studied devotedly with Iannis Xenakis, whom he considered to be the modern descendant of Varese. Xenakis became his master in *thinking differently*, broadening his horizons to include architecture and mathematics. This was really his only formal education, probably because Xenakis asked for nothing and gave him everything.

Dusapin's first pieces, *Souvenir du silence* (1975), *Timée* (1978) were appreciated by the two composers, Franco Donatoni and Hughes Dufourt, and they gave him their full support. André Boucourechliev gave him precious advice and the mottos that would accompany him throughout his career: "Never forget the instrument at the back of the orchestra." and "Sincerity is never a virtue in art."

In 1977 he won the Fondation de la Vocation prize and in 1988 he received an award from the Villa Médicis where he was resident for two years while he wrote *Tre Scalini*, *Fist*, and his first **Quatuor**, **Niobé**. He returned from Rome more determined than ever to live while composing and to compose while living. In the summer of 1986, he wrote *Assai* for Dominique Bagouet's ballet company. Their collaboration was rich, both personally and artistically, and the tour of *Assai* led him to travel the world for several years.

In 1986, with the encouragement of Rolf Lieberman, he launched himself into the composition of his first opera, written in close collaboration with the author, Olivier Cadiot. *Roméo & Juliette* diverges from conventional intrigue and genre. It is a musical-literary revolution where each word is chosen for its sound and its rhythm and is then tightly intertwined with the completely unfettered music. The work premiered simultaneously in July of 1989 at the Montpellier Opera and at the Avignon Festival, before going on international tour. Henceforth, Pascal Dusapin would tie in his love of literature to his operatic works. *Medeamaterial*, based on the work by Heiner Müller opened at the

Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels in 1991. This was followed by *To be sung*, based on Gertrude Stein's work, and was created in tandem with the great mixed media artist and light designer, James Turell, at the Théâtre des Amandiers in Nanterre. In 2003, *Perelà, Uomo di fumo*, based on the book by Aldo Palazzeschi, opened at the Opéra Bastille in Paris. Dusapin went on to write the librettos for his two following operas: *Faustus, The Last Night* which opened at the Staatsoper Unter den Linden in Berlin in 2006 and *Passion* which premiered at the Aix-en-Provence Festival in 2008 inspired by the myth of Orpheus. Continuing his *mise-en-abyme* of ancient heroes, he confronts Kleist's reference book in his last opera, *Penthesilea*, premiered in March 2015 at La Monnaie in Brussels, from which he composed a suite for soprano and orchestra, *Wenn du dem Wind...* premiered at the Suntory Hall in Tokyo in August 2014 and then performed again at the Philharmonie de Paris in March 2015.

Throughout the writing of his operas, various other works were born, including seven string quartets (the sixth with orchestra), and various vocal works such as *La Melancholia, Granum Sinapis, Dona Eis* and *Disputatio*. He also wrote *Sept études pour piano, A Quia* concerto for piano, and seven solos for orchestra: *Go, Extenso, Apex, Clam, Exeo, Verso* (premiered by the Berliner Philharmoniker and Simon Rattle) and *Uncut*. This cycle of seven orchestral forms, composed between 1991 and 2009, is a long symphonic tale of life and of human emotions and artistry. A new cycle for orchestra is in development and is inspired by nature. *Morning in Long Island* will be the first Concerto n°1 for orchestra, suggested by the shapes of the wind. It was premiered in 2010 by the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France conducted by Myung-Whun Chung. Amongst his last works we can mention his violin concerto, *Aufgang*, commissioned by violinist Renaud Capuçon, his piece for piano and six instruments, *Jetzt genau!* and a cello concerto, *Outscape*, written for Alisa Weilerstein that was premiered in May 2015 by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. His double concerto *At Swim-two-birds*, written for violinist Viktoria Mullova and cellist Matthew Barley, was premiered on the 30th September 2017 by the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, followed by Gewandhaus Leipzig, the Orchestre national de France, the London Philharmonic Orchestra and the Seattle Symphony Orchestra.

Pascal Dusapin has been the recipient of numerous prizes and awards, including the title of Commandeur des Arts et Lettres, the Cino del Duca prize in 2005, and the Dan David Prize in 2007. Also in 2007 he was granted the title of Academician at the *Bayerische Académie* in Munich and became Artistic Chairman at the Collège de France, only the second composer after Pierre Boulez to hold the position. He has published a book based on his experiences and his conferences entitled "*Une musique en train de se faire*" (Music in the making, published by Seuil). In 2010 and 2011 he was Guest Professor at Musikhochschule in Munich.

Dusapin's interests and passions are many, from morphogenesis to philosophy (with a particular interest in Deleuze), from photography, to architecture, to the theatre of Samuel Beckett, to Flaubert's work, among others. All of these contribute to his freedom of invention, and allow multiple layers of meaning, understanding and emotion in his works. He has collaborated with many different artists, combining his multidisciplinary talents with theirs: Sasha Waltz, James Turell, Peter Mussbach, Laurence Equilbey, The Accroche Note Ensemble, the Berlin Philharmonic,

Simon Rattle, and the Arditti Quartet. New projects have also brought him into the realm of electronics on a grand scale in such exceptional venues as the Grand Palais for the Monumenta by Richard Serra or the beach at Deauville for the 150th anniversary of the city. In November 2011, he directed himself his piano and baritone cycle on poems by Nietzsche, ***O Mensch!***, at the Paris Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord. In October 2014, he imagined a visual and sound installation for the Donaueschingen Festival, "Mille Plateaux" that will then travel to other locations, amongst them, in 2015, the installation was shown in the Lieu Unique, Nantes, France.

A unique artist, Pascal Dusapin continues his musical journey, formal and yet never dogmatic, offering his fiercely emotional music through a great range of diverse forms.

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