

MUSIC FOR SIRENS

Every first Wednesday of the month at noon, sirens ring out across the Czech Republic for almost three minutes. It is simply a test of their operability, but over the years, it has become something of an event. After years of dreaming and with the 20th season approaching in 2020, the BERG Orchestra asked twenty composers to write short chamber pieces that would use the siren test as a musical instrument. The result is a series of micro-concerts / musical interventions / happenings. The concerts take place at various universities and schools or in collaboration with institutions such as the Academy of Sciences, the National Library, and others. Every composer has a different approach, which is great! And thanks to our collaboration with the Czech Radio team, who decided to broadcast these concerts live, it has become literally a dream project. Contemporary music suddenly gets to a huge number of people - at noon on a work day. It's playful, just like we like it!

The MUSIC FOR SIRENS demonstrates that music does not necessarily have to be just a set of notes performed by a musician on a musical instrument, but that music is primarily the organisation of sounds: it is an everyday part of our being and inherently based on the principles of nature. Newly commissioned compositions, musical miniatures for sirens, or let's say, musical interventions in space, can be an inspiration for listening to the surrounding environment as a musical structure. These pieces are like the vitamins of sound - impulses for the ears which can awaken unorthodox thinking on music, encourage hearing and listening to the sound environment, so important to our existence. Specific locations are integral parts of each composition, and also provide a marvellous moment during listening, as the viewer also perceives the overall environment in addition to the sound. A live broadcast for listeners of Czech Radio Vltava also forms part of the performance. The composition's sound world is extended to other locations and listeners can listen to it from their own perspective, with the test signal being heard from the sound at their location as well. What results is a real-time and genuine connection through radio, between the place where the music is performed and the places in which the radio is heard, effected through the siren test - a sonic object which is heard across the city.

The project began in the spring of 2019 and in the first year of the project, more than ten new compositions were performed and broadcast live. (*Czech keywords for searching: Hudba k siréně*)

Composition no. 3:

Ian Mikyska: A Succession of Several Sounds and Silences (Sled několika zvuků a tich)

Composer and musician Ian Mikyska invites the sound of the acoustic siren and its test into his composition, along with other sounds of the city. He simply suggests a way of capturing silence through listening. The premiere took place on the remains of the Gothic fortifications of the city of Prague between the Folimanka and Ztracenka parks on 1 May 2019. This is one of the few compositions created within the Music for Sirens project to be performed outdoors.

Clarinets - Renata Raková and Anna Sysová,

Electric guitar - Tomáš Mika,

Percussion - Šimon Veselý

Ian Mikyska: <https://www.ianmikyska.com>

