

Klas Torstensson (January 16, 1951, Sweden) studied composition at the Ingesunds Musikhögskola (Sweden), musicology at the University of Gothenburg (Sweden), and electronic music at the Institute of Sonology, Utrecht, Netherlands.

The composer Klas Torstensson has lived and worked most of his adult life in the Netherlands, but his music crosses borders – in all respects. Despite the abstract nature of his music, sometimes there is a role for nature impressions from his native Sweden (including the North Pole region). In his outspoken modernist (often targeted as “noisy”) early works, he followed in the footsteps of Edgar Varèse and Iannis Xenakis. From the time when he wrote the opera **The Expedition** (1994-1999) and onwards, however, he enriched his original modernist approach with sounds, colors and even melody types from the classical symphonic tradition, which he uses dramatically and sometimes in shocking contrast with each other.

Torstensson’s compositions are performed by orchestras, ensembles and soloists worldwide and presented on most major European new music festivals: Huddersfield, Ultima (Oslo), Steirischer Herbst (Graz), Wien Modern, Stockholm New Music, Nordic Music Days (Reykjavik/Malmö/Berlin), Gaudeamus (Amsterdam), Warsaw, Gaida (Vilnius), Festival van Vlaanderen (Belgium), Holland Festival (Amsterdam), GAS (Gothenburg), NYXD (Tallinn), Darmstadt, to name only a few.

He was also featured composer at festivals such as Stockholm New Music 1999 (together with Mauricio Kagel and György Kurtág), Time of Music 2001, (Viitasaari, Finland), MontréBal-Nouvelles-Musiques 2003 and Sacrum Profanum 2009 (Krakow).

Urban Songs, for soprano Charlotte Riedijk, Ensemble Intercontemporain and computers, commissioned by IRCAM, Paris, was premiered in 1992, and was programmed for another two seasons by the same ensemble, as well as by many other European ensembles, such as Ensemble Modern (Frankfurt), Asko Ensemble (Amsterdam) and Kammar-ensembleN (Stockholm).

In 1994, Torstensson composed **The Last Diary** for reciting voice and large ensemble, based on the diaries of S.A. Andrées, leader of the tragic Arctic balloon expedition of 1897. **The Last Diary** has in the past decade also been translated into German – for performances in Vienna and Graz with H.K. Gruber in the role of Andrée – and Icelandic.

The same material served as a basis for his opera, **The Expedition** (1994-1999), for soloists, orchestra and electronics, to a libretto written by the composer. The opera was premiered in concert form during the 1999 Holland Festival in the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, in a performance conducted by Peter Eötvös. Performances followed in Germany, Sweden and Norway. From 1999 to 2002 Torstensson wrote a full-length cycle entitled **Lantern Lectures**. The cycle was a joint commission by Le Nouvel Ensemble Modern (Montréal), Asko Ensemble (Amsterdam), KammarensembleN (Stockholm) and Klangforum Wien. Over the past years, **Lantern Lectures** has been performed more than thirty times, by seven ensembles in fourteen countries.

In October 2004, the song cycle **In großer Sehnsucht** (on texts by five “tragic” women: Camille Claudel, Frida Kahlo, Cristina di Svezia, Rosa Luxemburg and Louise Michel) received its first performance in the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, with Charlotte Riedijk and the Osiris Piano Trio. In the concert season 2006/2007 the cycle went on tour through Sweden and was also presented in a staged version by Onafhankelijk Toneel during the Rotterdam Opera Days. The concerto for percussion and large ensemble, **Selfportrait with percussion (Lantern Lectures, Volume V)**, commissioned by Peppie Wiersma and the Asko Ensemble, was premiered during the Wittener Tage für neue Kammermusik in May 2006. Over the past years, the work has been performed in The Netherlands, USA, and Poland.

The Violin Concerto, written for and dedicated to Jennifer Koh and the Nieuw Ensemble, was first performed in May 2010 in Het Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ, Amsterdam. A chamber music version (**Pocket Size Violin Concerto**) was commissioned by the Swedish ensemble, The pearls before swine experience.

Between 2007 and 2012, Torstensson composed a set of orchestral pieces, **A cycle of the North**. The first work, **Fastlandet** ("The Mainland"), commissioned by the Dutch ZaterdagMatinee, was first performed in 2007 as the opening work of the series "Sibelius and the New Music" in the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, by the Radio Filharmonisch Orkest conducted by Jaap van Zweden. The second work, **Polarhavet** (The Polar Sea), a co-commission by the Sveriges Radios Symfoniorkester and the Stavanger Symfoniorkester (Norway), was premiered during the Baltic Sea Festival in Stockholm, August 2008. The Norwegian premiere followed in December 2008 (Stavanger Cultural Capital of Europe 2008). The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra of Stockholm commissioned, together with the Dutch Brabants Orkest, the third work of the cycle, **Himmelen** (The Heaven), which received its Dutch premiere in 2012 by the Brabants Orkest, conducted by Hans Leenders. During the season 2011-2012 Torstensson was composer in residence with the Brabants Orkest. The Swedish premiere of **Himmelen** followed in 2015, in a performance by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra of Stockholm, conducted by Sakari Oramo.

Again in the season 2012-2013, Torstensson was composer in residence at the Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ in Amsterdam. Several of his works from the last three decades were performed by ensembles such as MusikFabrik, New European Ensemble, Calefax, David Kweksilber Bigband, AskolSchönberg, and others.

The two ensemble-pieces **Sieben mal sieben** and **Sieben mal NEO** were written in 2013 for the New European Ensemble (The Netherlands) and the Norrbotten NEO (Sweden), respectively.

In March 2015, a large work for choir, **Arcadia 1689**, commissioned by the Dutch ZaterdagMatinee, was premiered by Het Groot OmroepKoor, conducted by Gijs Leenaars in the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam.

In the seasons to come, new works will be premiered: **Elliott loves bebop** for double quartet, commissioned by the combined ensembles Either/Or (New York) and SON (Stockholm); **Paris 1993** – a commission by the Swedish Radio for the Gageego Ensemble (Gothenburg); a **new work** for string ensemble for the Camerata Nordica (Sweden), and **Autunno di Christina**, a 'dramatic scene' for soprano Charlotte Riedijk and the Doelen Ensemble, commissioned by De Doelen, Rotterdam.

In the season 2016-2017, Torstensson's music will be presented during three *portrait concerts* given in New York (Miller Theatre), Stockholm (Konserthuset) and Luleå (Kulturens hus), Sweden, among others.

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