

Marco Stroppa

Extended Biography

A composer, researcher, and pedagogue, Marco Stroppa (Verona, 1959) studied music in Italy obtaining degrees from 1980 to 1983 in piano, choral music and choir conducting, composition, and electronic music at the Verona, Milan, and Venice Conservatories, studying under Laura Palmieri, Guido Bega, Renato Dionisi, Azio Corghi, and Alvis Vidolin. From 1984 to 1986 he pursued further studies of computer music, cognitive psychology, and artificial intelligence at the MIT Media Laboratory in Cambridge, Massachusetts, as a Fulbright Scholar.

From 1980 to 1984 he worked at the Centre for Computational Sonology (Centro di Sonologia Computazionale) at Padua University, where he composed his first mixed music work, *Traiettorie* (1984), for piano and computer sounds.

In 1982, at the behest of Pierre Boulez, he moved to Paris, where he worked as a composer and researcher at IRCAM (Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique), becoming the Director of the Music Research Department in 1987. In 1990, he resigned from this position to focus fully to composition, research, and teaching. Nonetheless, regular contact with IRCAM during his time in France was crucial to his musical training and development as a composer.

Stroppa taught composition at the Paris and Lyon Conservatoires (CNSMD), and in 1999, was appointed full professor of composition and computer music at the University of Music and Performing Arts (Musikhochschule) in Stuttgart, succeeding Helmut Lachenmann. In addition, he continues to regularly participate in pedagogical activities at IRCAM.

An active and respected teacher, Stroppa founded the Workshop of Composition and Computer Music at the International Bartok Seminar in Szombathely, Hungary, in 1987, serving as director there for thirteen years. This experience allowed him to meet leading Hungarian musicians such as Péter Eötvös, Zoltán Kocsis, György Kurtág, György Ligeti, Miklós Perényi, László Somfai, and to familiarize himself with the work of numerous Hungarian poets. These encounters significantly influenced his works *élet...fogytiglan: Dialogue imaginaire entre un poète et un philosophe* (1997) and *Hommage à Gy.K.* (2004).

A recipient of numerous prizes, including an ASCAP Prize in 1985, Cervo New Music Prize in 1990, an honourable mention at the Prix Italia in 1992, and the Salzburg Kompositionspreis des Osterfestspiele in 1996, Stroppa has published dozens of essays and interviews in various international publications. He is currently preparing a book on his own work with the support of the composer and musicologist Francis Courtot.

Stroppa's creative output is often grouped into cycles of works centered around a particular theme. His works draw frequently inspiration from poetry and mythology, ecological and socio-political issues, the study of ethnomusicology and personal contact with musicians such as Pierre-Laurent Aimard, Cécile Daroux, Florian Hölscher, Thierry Miroglio, Jean-Guihen Queyras, Teodoro Anzellotti, Mario Caroli and Benny Sluchin.

Stroppa's catalogue includes numerous works for orchestra and traditional instruments, radio operas, concerto, ballet and theatrical music, works for electronic instruments and new medias and context-dependent pieces, e.g., his music for piano and electronics for the performance piece *Race* by Pascal Rambert, premiered at the October Festival in Normandy in 1997. Noteworthy examples include two books of *Miniature estrose* for solo piano, a cycle of compositions for solo instrument and "chamber electronics" – a term of his own invention – inspired by poems by E.E. Cummings, comprising *Auras* (2003), *little i* (1996), *I will not kiss your f.ing flag* (2005), *... of silence* (2007) and *hist whist* (2009), as well as a cycle of concertos for solo instrument and orchestra or ensemble inspired by the poetry of W.B. Yeats,

including *Upon a Blade of Grass* for piano and orchestra (1996) and *From Needle's Eye* for trombone, double quintet, and percussion (1996, revised in 2008).

Other noteworthy pieces include *Zwielicht* (1998) for contrabass, two percussionists and sound projections in 13 dimensions; *Come Natura di Foglia* for voice and electronics, commissioned by IRCAM and Stroppa's first work for voice; *Cantilena* (2003) for three choirs of sixteen singers; *Lamento* (2006) for six-part choir; *Perchè non riusciamo a vederla*, «screams, pleas and clamours» for choir a cappella with viola obbligato ad libitum (2008); *Ritratti senza volto* (2007), a commission of the Paris Orchestra; the concertos *No Boughs* for piccolo and string orchestra and *And one by one we drop away* for cello and orchestra (both from 2006); *Like Milk Spilt* (2008) for accordion, two "shadow accordions" and four orchestral groups; and *Let me sing into your ear* (2010) for basset horn and orchestra.

His first opera, *Re Orso*, based on a text by Arrigo Boito, was premiered at the Paris Opéra Comique in 2012.

His most recent major commissions include *Lance dei crepuscoli* (2022-2023) for electroacoustic totem and ambisonic system by IRCAM-Centre Pompidou, *Trois études paradoxales* (2019) for piano by Radio France and *Come play with me* (2016) for solo electronics and orchestra by SWR Symphonieorchester.