

## Ernst von Siemens Music Prize 2019 for Rebecca Saunders

### Biography

With her distinctive and intensely striking sonic language, Berlin-based British composer Rebecca Saunders (b. 1967) is a leading international representative of her generation.

Born in London, she studied composition with Nigel Osborne in Edinburgh and Wolfgang Rihm in Karlsruhe. Saunders pursues an intense interest in the sculptural and spatial properties of organised sound. *chroma I–XX* (2003–17), *Stasis* and *Stasis Kollektiv* (2011/16) are expanding spatial collages of up to twenty-five chamber groups and sound sources set in radically different architectural spaces. *insideout*, a 90-minute collage for a choreographed installation, created in collaboration with Sasha Waltz, was her first work for the stage and received over 100 international performances. Most recently in 2017, *Yes*, an expansive 80-minute spatial installation composition, was written for Musikfabrik, Donatienne Michel Dansac and Enno Poppe for the extraordinary architectural spaces of the Berlin Philharmonie and the St. Eustache Cathedral in Paris.

Since 2013, Saunders has written a series of solos and duos for performers with whom she has collaborated closely over many years, including *Bite* (2016) for bass flute, *Aether* (2016) for bass clarinet duo, *dust* (2017/18) for percussion, *O* (2017) for soprano, *hauch* (2018) for violin, and *Flesh* (2017/18) for accordion. She has simultaneously pursued her keen interest in works in the concertante form, writing a double percussion concerto *Void* (2014), a trumpet concerto *Alba* (2015), and both *Skin* (2016) and *Yes* (2017) for soprano and large ensemble. *Alba* and *Void* marked the close of a triptych of works which also includes the violin concerto *Still* (2011). In 2016, her extended violin concerto *Still* (2011/16) was performed in collaboration with the choreographer Antonio Rúz, the dancers of Sasha Waltz & Guests, Carolin Widmann, the Junge Deutsche Philharmonie and Sylvain Cambreling. In 2018 her double bass concert *Fury II* was performed in collaboration with the Ensemble Modern and the Performer Emanuel Gat.

Saunders' music has been performed and premiered by many prestigious ensembles, soloists and orchestras including Ensemble Musikfabrik, Klangforum Wien, Ensemble Modern, Quatuor Diotima, Ensemble Dal Niente, Asko|Schönberg, the Arditti Quartet, Ensemble Resonanz, Ensemble Recherche, ICE, the Neue Vocalsolisten, Ensemble Remix, SWRSO, WDRSO and the BBCSO, amongst many others. Her compositions have been recognised with numerous international prestigious awards, for example the musica viva Composition Prize of ARD and BMW AG, the Paul Hindemith Prize, Royal Philharmonic Society Awards for *Stirrings Still* in 2008 and *Fletch* in 2013, BASCA British Composer Awards for *Solitude* in 2013 and *Alba* in 2016, and the GEMA Music Prize for Instrumental Music. In 2015, Saunders received the Hans und Gertrud Zender Foundation Prize and the prestigious Mauricio Kagel Music Preis, and both a BASCA Composer Award and an RPS Award for *Skin* in 2017. In 1996, Rebecca Saunders received the Composers Prize of the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation. Accordionist Teo Anzellotti's CD, *...of waters making moan*, which included Saunders' eponymous work, won the German Record Critics' Award of the Year for 2016.

Saunders is in great demand as a composition tutor and teaches regularly at, amongst others, the Darmstadt Summer Courses and at the Impuls Academy in Graz. She has been professor of composition at the Hannover University of Music, Theatre and Media since 2011. She lives in Berlin and is a member of the Berlin Academy of Arts and the Sachsen Academy of Arts in Dresden.

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