

Abstracts

Tim Rutherford-Johnson: Structure, Sound and Metaphor
in Chaya Czernowin's Operas

In April 2017 and October 2019 I conducted two interviews with Chaya Czernowin. The first was related to her third opera, *Infinite Now*, the second to her fourth opera, *Heart Chamber*. On both occasions Czernowin used an elaborate metaphorical language to describe her works and their structure, something she frequently does in interviews and in her own writings. This essay sets the composer's words against close readings of the two operas. It seeks to offer detailed descriptions of these two operas, to set them in the context of Czernowin's output to date, and to assess the extent to which the metaphorical language that Czernowin uses to describe her work is useful as an analytical prompt.

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Ludger Engels: On Composition and Direction. In Conversation
with Chaya Czernowin

The basis for this conversation is the joint work on *Zaide/Adama*, which describes the encounter of two foreign cultures. In a mirror image, as it were, Chaya Czernowin and Ludger Engels talk about the similarities, differences and possibilities in the development of compositions and scenic concepts. Starting from the question of where composition ends and direction begins, and vice versa, aspects of dealing with material are outlined from both perspectives and tools and methods are revealed as to how information about phenomena, states, situations and persons of everyday life are documented as indications for actions in the form of compositions.

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Hila Tamir Ostrover: The Drifting Sounds of Chaya Czernowin's *Sahaf*.
Being Carried Away by Sound

Chaya Czernowin's music often probes into the complex relationship between sound and our integrated bodily experience. This paper analyzes Czernowin's chamber piece *Sahaf* from this perspective. Interviews with Czernowin reveal that the composer had a detailed image in mind while composing this piece. The paper traces the crossmodal correspondences of *Sahaf*'s sounds with vision, motion and spatial location in alignment with Czernowin's imagery, while accounting for overarching processes and struc-

ture. For Czernowin the visual and sonic dimensions in *Sahaf* are woven together in an intricate and mutually-dependent way. The result is a self-reflective piece, in which crossmodality is not only a compositional tool but also the subject of investigation.

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Julia Kursell: Swarms and other Hiding Places. *HIDDEN* for string quartet and electronics by Chaya Czernowin

This article about Chaya Czernowin's piece *HIDDEN for string quartet and electronics* (2013/14) takes the title as its point of departure. It asks not so much *what* is hidden, but *how* the piece creates various instances of relating the audible and the inaudible. A first characteristic phenomenon it analyzes is the acoustic swarm, in which the features of the single elements merge into something new without fully disappearing. A second phenomenon discussed is acoustic masking. Two instances of very loud sounds in the piece make consistent use of masking to also merge various layers of heterogeneous sounds. A third phenomenon concerns instrumentation. While the piece is written for and played by a string quartet, the formation of a larger whole among the four players is by no means evident. This is discussed using the example of an instance when the four players do form an entity of its own, metaphorically described in the score as a hand groping in the dark. The fourth and final phenomenon that is discussed with respect to how it affects the relation between the audible and the inaudible is the slowness of the overall progression. This yields a concluding comment about how listening in this piece becomes the site where musical form is taking shape.

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Barbara Eckle: The Dissolving Gaze. Chaya Czernowin's Concept of Landscape in the Context of her Composition *HIDDEN*

Landscape is a term frequently but unconventionally used in Chaya Czernowin's music, denoting an explicit counter-concept to dramatic or narrative processes. Dissolving subjective perspectives and other conventional parameters of orientation, her associative landscape images describe contradictory, utopian, extraterrestrial terrains that are inaccessible to humans and at the same time dwell deep within them. In the period 2014–16, she musically elaborated her concept of landscape on works such as *HIDDEN*, *Adiantum Capillus-Veneris*, *Winter Songs V* and differentiated them into various typologies. They serve as a means to fathom and communicate deeply unsettling experiences through a visual, physical and haptic levels of imagination.

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Trevor Bača: Dreams of Flying and Falling. Chaya Czernowin's *Guardian* for violoncello and orchestra

Chaya Czernowin's *Guardian* (2017) for cello and orchestra is the composer's seventh work for soloist (or small ensemble) and orchestra. One of Czernowin's most arresting works, the piece is an exceptional example of the strange, fascinating musical narratives one finds throughout the composer's instrumental music. Here we propose an analysis of the piece as two interwoven stories told in twelve overlapping sections. We follow this with observations about the piece, and about Czernowin's instrumental writing, in general.