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| Gubaidulina, Sofia Asgatovna (1931--) |
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| Sofia Gubaidulina was born in Chistopol in the Tatar Autonomous Societ Socialist Republic, of mixed Russian and Tatar parentage. After graduating from Kazan Conservatoire in 1954, she studied in Moscow with Nikolay Peyko and Vissarion Shebalin, winning a Stalin Fellowship. Her unconventional approach to composition, including investigating microtonal tunings, led to her music being viewed with disapprobation by the authorities. She was, however, given encouragement by Shostakovich, and was able to continue experimenting in her film music.  In 1975 she founded the Astreia, an improvisational group using Russian, Caucasian and Asian folk and ritual instruments, with composers Vyacheslav Artyomov and Viktor Suslin and, like Schnittke and Denisov, absorbed in a highly personal way new compositional techniques being developed in the West, something that contributed to her being blacklisted as one of ‘Khrennikov’s seven’ at the Sixth Congress of the Union of Soviet Composers in 1979. She was nevertheless championed in Russia by a number of performers, including Gidon Kremer, Friedrich Lips, Mark Pekarsky, Valery Popov and Vladimir Tonkha. Kremer’s performances of the violin concerto *Offertorium* were one of the contributing factors to Gubaidulina’s increasing success outside the USSR in the 1980s. She was allowed to travel to the West in the first time in 1985, and has been resident near Hamburg since 1992. |
| Biography  Sofia Gubaidulina was born in Chistopol in the Tatar Autonomous Societ Socialist Republic, of mixed Russian and Tatar parentage. After graduating from Kazan Conservatoire in 1954, she studied in Moscow with Nikolay Peyko and Vissarion Shebalin, winning a Stalin Fellowship. Her unconventional approach to composition, including investigating microtonal tunings, led to her music being viewed with disapprobation by the authorities. She was, however, given encouragement by Shostakovich, and was able to continue experimenting in her film music.  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International commissions began to arrive after the success of *Offertorium*, and significant works from this period include *Stimmen… Verstummen…*, a symphony in twelve movements (1986), *And: The Feast is in Full Procession* for ‘cello and orchestra (1993), the Concerto for viola and orchestra (1996) and *The Canticle of the Sun* for cello, chamber choir and percussion (1997). Her largest work to date is the diptych *St John Passion* (2000) and *St John Easter* (2002), commissioned by the International Bachakademie Stuttgart for the ‘Passion 2000’ project, and the Norddeutschen Rundfunk, Hamburg respectively.  Other significant works written since then include *The Lyre of Orpheus* for violin, percussion, and strings (2006), a second violin concerto, *In tempus praesens* (2007), written for Anne-Sophie Mutter, the percussion concerto *Glorious Percussion* (2008), and *Fachwerk*, a concerto for *bayan*, percussion and strings (2009)  She is a member of the Akademie der Künste in Berlin, the Freie Akademie der Künste in Hamburg and the Royal Swedish Academy of Music, and has received the Prix de Monaco (1987), the Premio Franco Abbiato (1991), the Heidelberger Kьnstlerinnenpreis (1991), the Russian [State](http://russia.rin.ru/guides_e/6601.html) Prize (1992), the SpohrPreis (1995), Praemium Imperiale in Japan (1998), the Sonning Prize in Denmark (1999), and the Polar Music Prize in Sweden (2002). Style Gubaidulina’s modernism lies essentially in her approach to sound, and her philosophical exploration of its nature. Her employment of unusual instruments and performing techniques throughout her career take her detailed investigation into sound far beyond such approaches as sonorism, and has something in common with the work of Luigi Nono, whose music had a considerable impact on Russian composers of Gubaidulina’s generation.  Her earliest acknowledged music, such as the Piano Sonata (1965) clearly reveals the influence of the essentially neo-baroque counterpoint of the Shostakovich *Preludes*, but the harmonic vocabulary is far more angular: dodecaphonic procedures are characteristic of this period, though used in a highly personal manner. In *Night in Memphis* (1968), for example, the intervals of the series are subdivided in such a way as to reflect the binary division of the work’s theme, between the personal and the extra-personal, the rational and the spontaneous. There is also no conventional sense of discursive development, but rather an episodic structure in which time often seems to be suspended, something that would come to be characteristic of much of Gubaidulina’s work.  There is already an interest in sonic experimentation, including, in the Sonata, percussive effects on the keyboard and playing directly on the strings inside the instrument as well as on the keyboard. In *Rubaiyat* (1969), performance techniques become the means of transmitting in extraordinarily direct fashion the emotions depicted in the text, the baritone soloist, for example, working from lyrical singing to the use of the microphone, adding one by one techniques such as *Sprechstimme*, sighing and glissando. Such techniques have been frequently employed by Gubaidulina in combination with religious symbolism, as demonstrated by *In croce* (1979/92), whose registral crossings represent the two planes of the Cross.  Other examples of the symbolism of duality include the ‘Solo per direttore’ in the Symphony *Stimmen...Verstummen* (1986) the intersections between notated and improvised worlds in *Stufen* of (1992) and between ‘high’ and ‘low’ realms in *Sieben Worte* (1982) for 'cello, bayan and strings and the bayan concerto *Fachwerk* (2009), and the two realms created by the use of tape, and the technique of bouncing rubber balls on the strings, in the String Quartet no. 4 (1993).  In many works from *Offertorium* (1980) onwards, fragmentation and dissolution are deconstructed and transcended. The Bach theme on which the work is built is ‘analysed’ orchestrally, by means of *Klangfarbenmelodie*, but is the cue for a gradual rebuilding of the music’s identity, a project that one may consider has taken the composer into post-modernism. Certainly at the time of *Offertorium*’s great exposure and success in the West, it could not be seen as *avant-garde*: rather, its employment of modernist vocabulary was entirely natural, as was its overt connection with the past. Selected List of Works: *Phacelia*, soprano, symphony orchestra (1956)  Sonata, piano (1965)  Piano Quintet (1957)  *Night in Memphis* mezzo-soprano, tape, chamber orchestra (1968/1988/1992)  *Rubaiyat*, baritone, chamber orchestra (1969)  *Concordanza*, ensemble (1971)  String Quartet no. 1 (1971)  *Steps*, speaker, orchestra (1972/1986/1992)  *Hour of the Soul*, mezzo-soprano, large wind orchestra (1974)  Concerto for bassoon and low strings (1975)  *Introitus*, piano and chamber orchestra (1978)  *De profundis*, bayan (1978)  *In croce,* cello, organ (1979)  *Offertorium*, violin and orchestra (1980/1982/1986)  *Seven Words*, cello, bayan, strings (1982)  *Hommage à Marina Tsvetaeva*, choir (1984)  Symphony *Stimmen… verstummen…*, orchestra (1986)  *Hommage à T.S. Eliot*, soprano, instrumental octet (1987)  String Quartet no. 2 (1987)  String Quartet no. 3 (1987)  String Trio (1989)  *Pro et Contra*, large orchestra (1989)  *Alleluia*, choir, boy soprano, organ, large orchestra, colour organ (ad lib.) (1990)  *From the Book of Hours*, cello, orchestra, male choir, female reader (1991)  *Now Always Snow*, ensemble, chamber choir (1993)  *And: The Festivities at their Height*, cello, orchestra (1993)  String Quartet no, 4 (1993)  *Quaternion*, 4 cellos (1996)  Concerto for Viola and Orchestra (1996)  *Canticle of the Sun*, cello, chamber choir, 2 percussion (1997)  *St John Passion*, S,T,Bar,B, small choir, large choir, large orchestra (2000)  *St John Easter*, S,T,Bar,B, small choir, large choir, large orchestra (2001)  *On the Edge of the Abyss*, 7 cellos, 2 aquaphones (2002)  *The Light of the End*, large orchestra (2002)  *Under the Sign of Scorpio*, [bayan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bayan_(accordion)), large orchestra (2003)  *...The Deceitful Face of Hope and Despair*, flute and orchestra (2005)  *The Lyre of Orpheus*, violin, percussion and strings (2006)  *In Tempus Praesens*, violin and orchestra (2007)  *Ravvedimento*, cello, 4 guitars (2007)  *Glorious Percussion*, percussion and orchestra (2008)  *Fachwerk*, bayan, percussion and strings (2009)  *Labyrinth*, 12 cellos (2011) |
| Further reading:  (Damaris Neary)  (Jacobsen)  (Kurtz)  (Lemaire)  (Lukomsky)  (McBurney)  (Moody)  Moody, I. (2013) ‘In Time and Out of Time: Theology in Sofia Gubaidulina's *St John Passion and St John Easter*’, Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Orthodox Liturgical Music, Joensuu, Finland, forthcoming  (Restagno) |