

Katia Tchemberdji

- Biography -

Katia Tchemberdji was born in Moscow in 1960. At the age of seven she began to attend the Moscow Conservatory's Central School of Music. Later, in 1978, she was admitted to the Conservatory to study composition, music theory, and the piano. Her most important teachers were Nikolai Korndorf, Yuri Kholopov, and Sergei Balassanian.

Graduating with distinction in 1984, Katia Tchemberdji gained diplomas in both composition and music theory. These qualifications enable her to teach theoretical subjects, composition, and the piano. These she taught at the Gnesin State Institute for Musical Education in Moscow from 1984 to 1990. In 1986 Katia Tchemberdji became a member of the Soviet Composers' Union. Since 1990 she has lived in Berlin.

Much sought after both as a composer and a pianist, Katia Tchemberdji has received invitations to participate in numerous international chamber music festivals. They have included the Kuhmo Chamber Music Festivals in Finland (1988-1993), the Festival of Women Composers in Kassel (1990), the Arjeplog festival in Sweden (1991), and the Heidelberg festivals (1991 and 1994). She has been a guest at the Berlin Festwochen (1991), the Berlin Biennale (1993), the New Music Days in Zurich (1992), the Lerchenborg Music Days in Denmark (1994), the Sacro Art Festival in Loccum (1995 and 1997), the 'Russian Contemporary Music' festival in Ulm (1996), the International Oleg Kagan Music Festivals in Kreuth (1996 and 1999), and the 'Cortona Weeks' in Italy (1997 and 1998). As the accompanist of cellist Natalia Gutman she went on extended European concert tours. Between 1996 and 2001 Katia Tchemberdji made a number of recordings for DeutschlandRadio which included works by Bartók, Prokofiev, Glinka and Medtner, and was to be heard as soloist in numerous solo recitals.

Katia Tchemberdji has received commissions from a number of distinguished musicians and organizations. Her chamber music, which constitutes a major part of her work, has been acclaimed at concerts in Tokyo, New York, London, Salzburg, Zurich, Berlin and Moscow. The premiere in the monastery church of Loccum on 2 July 1997 of her cantata 'Cantus controversus' for soprano, baritone, male chorus, chamber orchestra and percussion ensemble (based on Psalms 76 and 77, and texts by Albert Einstein) as well as the first performance of her chamber opera 'Max and Moritz' (based on the story by Wilhelm Busch) on 8 October 1999 in Stadthagen were tremendous successes.

In April 2001 a series of recordings for broadcast productions with Deutschlandfunk were made as well as a CD (col legno) with the following works: "Lerchenborg-Trio", the clarinet sonata, "Tag und Nacht", "Atem und Puls" and "Widmung". In August 2001 Tchemberdji stayed at the International Chamber Music Course at the Thüringische Sommerakademie (Böhlen) as composer-in-residence. In October 2001 she was to be heard as soloist in Louise Adolpha Le Beau's piano concerto op. 37 which was performed by the Kammer-symphonie Berlin and conducted by Jürgen Bruns on the occasion of the Beethoven Congress at the Hochschule der Künste in Berlin.

In 2002 the broadcast channel SWR 2 produced recordings of Bohuslav Martinů's „Sinfonietta giocosa“ und Richard Strauss' „Der Bürger als Edelmann“ with Tchemberdji playing the piano. Moreover she accompanied the young cellist Sebastian Klinger on his début album with Robert Schumann's Adagio and Allegro Op. 70 (Ars Musici-Primavera FMF AMP 5107-2). Since 2002 Katia Tchemberdji has devoted herself more and more to the playing on the fortepiano and on the square

pianoforte and has given a series of recitals on historical instruments from the collection of the foundation "Stiftung Lebensfarben" at Gutspark Neu-Kladow. Commissioned by "Stiftung Lebensfarbe" she composed a work, "Zeitreise" (Journey through the Time), for various historical keyboard instruments and synthesizer. She made the piano reduction of Alfred Schnittke's Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra No. 1 (SIKORSKI 1995).

Tchemberdji lately developed an interesting and innovating method of teaching composition to children. Two of her infant pupils were already awarded prizes at the 18th composition contest "Jeunesse musicale". For her elementary music theory and piano tuition she has devised an unusual patented 'keyboard ruler' which enables small children (between the ages of 3 and 4) to 'grasp' musical structures such as chords, intervals, melodies, major and minor scales, and twelve-tone rows. In 2003 Tchemberdji took up a professorship for composition for young people at the Neukölln "Paul Hindemith Music School" (Berlin).

In 2005 Tchemberdji was awarded the First Prize of the "musica femina" International Composition Contest. The same year she held a composition workshop at the Berlin Lessing-Gymnasium for the third time – her composition pupils are being regularly awarded at the "Jugend komponiert" contest.