

Ensemble U:

Ensemble U: is currently the most active and renowned contemporary music ensemble in Estonia. It has gained recognition for its ability to perform even the most demanding works without conductor, openness for bold experimental ideas and sensitivity for sound. Next to Estonia U: has performed in important international festivals like Time of Music (Viitasaari, Finland), GAIDA (Vilnius, Lithuania), Sounds New (Canterbury, UK), Nordic Music Days (Helsinki, Finland), Nuova Consonanza (Rome, Italy), Third Practice (Richmond, USA). In 2016 U: is invited to play in Biennale di Musica Venezia (Italy). In 2009, the Cultural Endowment of Estonia acknowledged Ensemble U: with the annual award for their engagement in the Estonian contemporary music.

U: performs the masterworks of modern composers as well as experimental compositions. One distinct field for U: is to delve into improvisational works and perform pieces that require the rendering of non-traditional notation. The repertoire includes authors from Estonia and abroad and the ensemble values the opportunity to continuously commission new music to be written for them. Among others, Toivo Tulev, Mari Vihmand, Tatjana Kozlova-Johannes, Märt-Matis Lill, Tauno Aints, Helena Tulve, Ülo Krigul, Andrus Kallastu, Andres Lõo (Estonia), Roméo Monteiro and Gérard Pape (France), Antti Auvinen and Kimmo Kuitunen (Finland), Arash Yazdani (Iran), Benjamin Broening, Brian Christian Scott Miller, Heather Stebbins, Christopher Chandler (USA) and Eugen Birman (Estonia/USA) have composed for U:.

In April 2009 ensemble U: released their first album "U:" consisting of works by Estonian composers dedicated to U: between 2004-2009. The CD's presentation took place in a 'double reality' - a virtual concert in the Estonian Virtual Embassy in Second Life, simultaneous with the live presentation, was the first of its kind in Estonia. The second album 'Protuberances' was released two years later, 2011. Ensemble's third CD, entitled „ALIVE" (2015) holds exclusively selected live recordings from 2012-14.

In the field of musical theatre U: has worked with one of the internationally most renowned conceptual dance choreographers in Estonia - Mart Kangro, on several occasions. Performances 'Play' (2006), 'Romeo & Juliet' (2008) and 'Harmony' (2009) have stemmed from this collaboration.

In seasons 2013/14 ensemble U: celebrated their tenth anniversary and started their own lecture-and-concert series titled 'URR - 10 years of resistance'. The series is continuing also at the present day, until June 2016 12 concerts on different subjects have taken place. Important themes of the modern music scene were introduced and performed in the concerts of URR. The concerts are realized in co-operation with the Estonian National Broadcast with live transmission in Klassikaraadio.

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