



Photo credit: Viktar Malyshchyc

'Blooming' for piano, chamber orchestra and narrator

'Blooming' is a new piece for piano, 13 players chamber orchestra and narrator by Norwegian composer Kari Beate Tandberg, commissioned by Insimul Sinfonietta with the support of the Arts Council Norway.

The 30-minute work was first conceived as a musical reaction to the book 'The Unwomanly Face of War' by exiled

Belarusian Nobel Prize laureate Svetlana Alexievich, with focus on the themes of suffering and courage, hopes and dreams in our time. The text can be narrated in any of the 30 translations of the book.

'Blooming' was premiered at Kapittel, the Stavanger International Festival for Literature and Freedom of Expression in

September 2023, with Belarusian pianist Olga Stezhko as a soloist.

Watch the 'Blooming' Trailer:
bit.ly/blooming_trailer



Olga Stezhko is an award-winning, critically acclaimed concert pianist who performs worldwide from Barbican Hall in London to Salle Cortot in Paris to Carnegie Hall in New York City. She resides in London and is currently unable to travel to her home country due to the risk of being arrested because of her active opposition against the current dictatorial regime in Belarus. Through a close collaboration between the composer and the soloist, the 'Blooming' project gradually evolved into a powerful statement of collective resilience against the abuse of power - an expression of solidarity with the fight for freedom and democracy.

OLGA STEZHKO ABOUT 'BLOOMING':

"As a musician, I witnessed countless examples of how a shared artistic experience can lead to meaningful discussions. Citizens around the world often fight for their rights and freedom invisibly to most of the world and with little awareness of similar struggles outside of their region. The powerful combination of music and words in 'Blooming' that leaves a lump in your throat, helps to bridge such gaps in mutual awareness.

It helps to foster international solidarity not only with my home country of Belarus, where we resist both the brutal dictatorial regime of Lukashenko and Russian cultural genocide but also with other nations around the

globe that fight for their post-colonial self-determination.

In one of the passages in 'The Unwomanly Face of War', Svetlana Alexievich observes: *'More than once afterward I met with these two truths that live in the same human being: one's own truth driven underground, and the common one, filled with the spirit of the time. The smell of newspapers. The first was rarely able to resist the massive onslaught of the second.'*

I was honoured to closely collaborate on the piece with Kari Beate and to be invited to perform the premiere of 'Blooming' in Stavanger. On a human level, it is more important than ever for artists to stand up to injustice, fight complacency, resist the onslaught of state propaganda and make the truth of an individual voice – with all its suffering, courage and hopes of our time - heard."

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