

The divine thawing of the core

The divine thawing of the core is a piece in a close formation to Galina Ustvolskaya's Symphony No. 2. It is written for and dedicated to Claire Chase who initiated the piece some years ago. Claire will play the contrabass flute as soloist, with an orchestra of six flutes, six oboes, six trumpets, trombone, tuba, percussion, piano and three cellos. The piece will be premiered in July 2025 during the Darmstadt Summer Course, followed up by performances in August during Time Spans Festival in NYC and during Lucerne Festival in September. It is commissioned by these three festivals.

Ustvolskaya's work has always been extremely important for me. I admire its courage and its directness and especially its capacity to unify the experience of sound and form. Especially important is the Symphony No. 2, a piece which must be experienced live when one would like to unlock its sonic luminosity and uniqueness. I therefore decided to offer a piece in a close formation to the 2nd Symphony with the hope, that this would also mean that Ustvolskaya's piece might be played at the same concert. However, *The divine thawing of the core* may be played alone. The two pieces are not related further than the lineup.

The pairing of this orchestration with Claire Chase playing the contrabass flute were a strong guide for the piece. It is a very elemental, naked and maybe an intimate beginning, which is forced to melt away through irony into an elemental brutality, in an uneven process, which includes a demonic waltz, in a gradual thawing of its features into a kind of a wholly different way of expression which is more coherent, ceremonial and brutally primitive.

During the time of writing the piece I was in Barcelona and saw the Basilica de la Sagrada Familia. Seeing this strange and gnarly structure clarified for me the structure of this piece. It is unperiodically cyclical, the repetitions creating cavernous corridors and strange temporal illusions in the unfolding of the piece.

The title comes from observing the political process of the last difficult years, and especially the change that Israel, my native country, is going through. It is hard to believe and devastating to follow the last two years, seeing how various long term underground processes and the 57 years long state of occupation are erupting, forcibly melting the last remaining vestiges of a culture which had some hope for peace and some ability for empathy into the darkness of ferocity and brutality to the degree of ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians under the guise of religion. This forced thawing of a democratic society into a theocracy under the guise of the Jewish divinity (and supremacy) is deeply painful to any person who believes in humanity.

However, this is not a political piece. It comes from pain; it attempts to find a way to digest the incomprehensible ongoing in order to maintain some sanity.