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WHEN
SHE
AWAKENS

For You, the Listener

When She Awakens is a musical journey through sound,timbre, and expression.The six selected pieces are each distinctive and substantial, inviting deep listening. I hope you find a quiet space—with good speakers or head-phones—where you can fully enjoy the dynamic range of this recording.

Though diverse in background and geography, composers Takemitsu, Cage, Birtwistle, Sciarrino, Murray Schafer, and Saariaho each redefined the boundaries of sound and silence. What connects them is a profound sensitivity to the material of sound itself; each composer inviting the listener into a unique sound world. Exploring the musical possi-bilities within these worlds has been a true privilege.

When She Awakens is lovingly dedicated to my children—Sara and Jonathan.

Sunniva



Toru Takemitsu: Stanza II (1971)

For harp and tape
(© Schott Music GmbH & Co KG)

Toru Takemitsu (1930–1996) was a composer, esthetic and a popular lecturer, largely self-taught. He was the first Japanese composer to gain international recognition. In 1951 he and a group of other artists, established the anti-academic Jikken Kobo («experimental workshop»), inspired by Western avant-garde. In 1957 Igor Stravinsky took notice of his work, leading to Takemitsu's international breakthrough Take-mitsu received many awards, among other the Glenn Gould Prize 1996. Today, the Toru Takemitsu Award is given to emerging composers.

Due to his experiences during World War II, Takemitsu was initially very negative towards his homeland. This changed after meeting John Cage; «*It was largely through my contact with John Cage that I came to recognize the value of my own tradition.*» Toru Takemitsu, 1984. Cage and Takemitsu developed a lifelong friendship.

Takemitsu perceived himself to be a visual being—he could not hear a sound without seeing a picture—and he could not see a picture without hearing a sound. Imaginary soundscapes appear in his music. Every day sounds are a natural part of that soundscape. Sound fragments are thrown together unstructured, like a dream; «*You go to a far place and suddenly find yourself back home without having noticed the return.*» Takemitsu, 1984.

Takemitsu employed electronics and musique concréte in his film music (over 100 films), but *Stanza II* is one of the few examples of him using electronics in his classical compositions. *Stanza II* was described by Takemitsu as «*a midday scene, a stone shatters the silence, words are exchanged, a bird crosses the sky, casting no shadow.*» It was composed for Ursula Holliger.

John Cage: In a Landscape (1948)

For piano and harp

John Cage (1912–1992) was an American composer, poet, philosopher and artist. A pioneer in aleatoric music, happenings, performance, electroacoustic music and non-standard use of instruments. Cage also played a role in the development of modern dance, through his collaboration with his partner, the dancer and choreographer Merce Cunningham. Cage is widely recognized as one of the most influential composers of the 20th Century.

«*John Cage shook the foundations of Western music and, with almost naive clarity, he evoked silence as the mother of sound.*» T.Takemitsu, 1984.

Cage was fascinated by Eastern philosophy and spirituality. He studied Zen Buddhism with the Zen master D.T.Suzuki, which influenced his music and philosophy. In 1946, Cage began teaching the Indian singer and tabla player Gita Sarbhai in Western music, on the condition that she would teach him in Indian music and philosophy. Her statement gave his compositions a new purpose:

«The purpose of music is to sober and quiet the mind, thus making it susceptible to divine influences.» Quoting Gita Sarbhai in *An Autobiographical statement*, 1990.

In a Landscape was composed for a dance performance during the summer sessions at Black Mountain College, NC, 1948. It is dedicated to Louise Lippold, who choreographed and danced to the piece. At that time, Cage and Cunningham were exploring the concepts of time and duration.

That summer, Cage also presented the music of Erik Satie, whose use of structure likely influenced *In a Landscape*. The rhythmic structure (15:5-7-3) provides the framework for the piece, and Cage uses traditional playing techniques, freely resonating within a tranquil atmosphere.

Harrison Birtwistle: Crowd (2005)

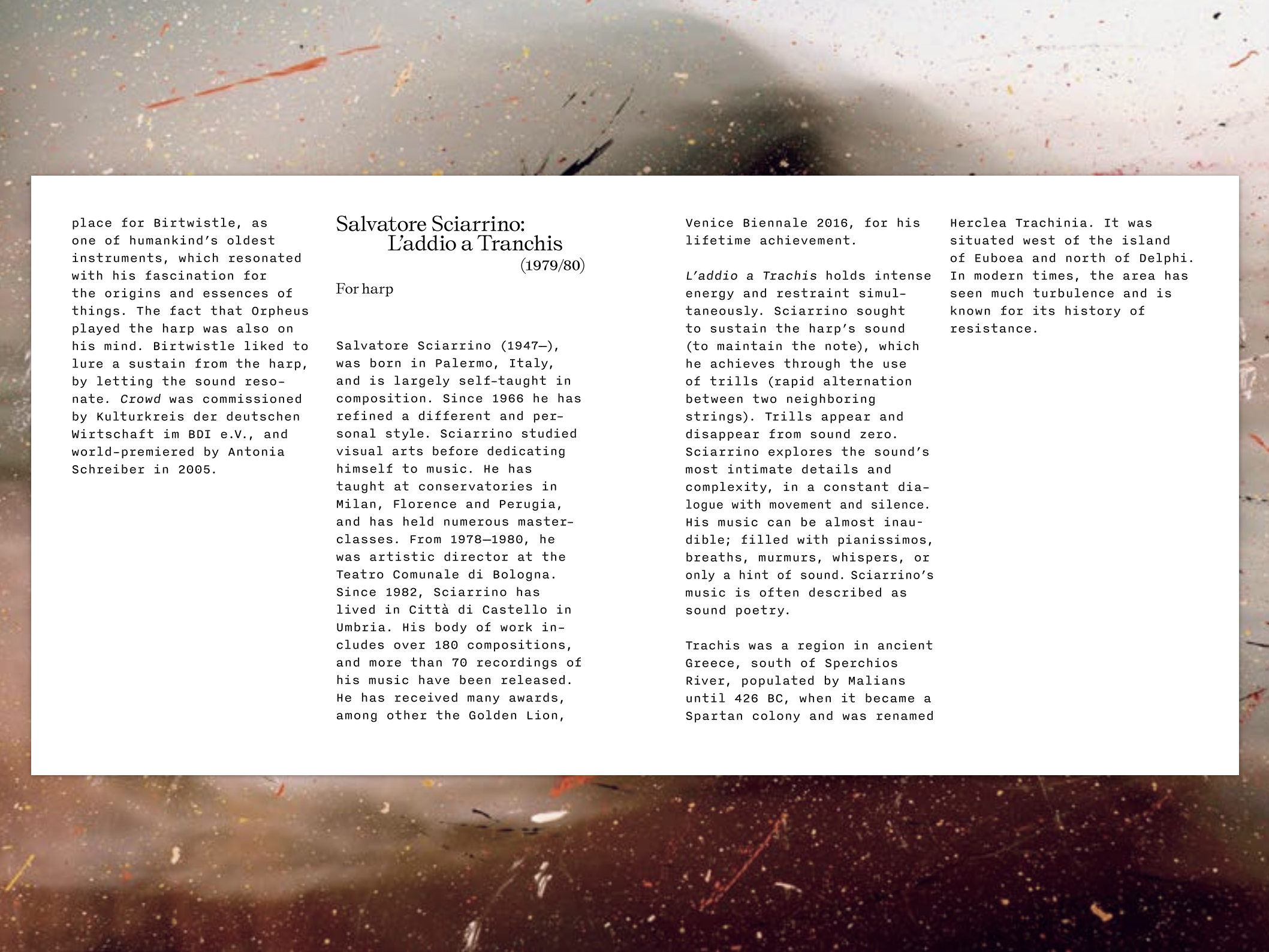
For solo harp

«I have always felt that I have had a music in my head that didn't exist. I wanted to write a music that would retain its mysteries and never become familiar.» Harrison Birtwistle.

Sir Harrison Birtwistle (1934–2022), born in Accrington, North England, studied at the Royal Manchester College of Music and the Royal Academy of Music in London. In the 1950s, he co-founded the New Music Manchester Group, embracing modernism. Birtwistle's approach to modernism was unique. His music incorporates both the modern and the ancient. Birtwistle was inspired by ancient times, English folktales, poetry and mythology. Several of his works are inspired by Orpheus, and one of his most well-known operas is *The Minotaur* (2008). Birtwistle's honors include being named Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, 1986, and he was made Companion of Honor by Queen Elizabeth II in 2001. Regarded as the grand old man of British classical music, he is one of the most prominent British composers of the 20th century.

«Crowd (etymologically related to the Celtic crwth, cruit and crot) was the English term used for instruments of the lyre class, and ultimately for a frame harp, from pre-Christian to medieval times.» From the score, Harrison Birtwistle.

Crowd explores the sound and essential qualities of the harp, deliberately avoiding clichés. The harp held a special



place for Birtwistle, as one of humankind's oldest instruments, which resonated with his fascination for the origins and essences of things. The fact that Orpheus played the harp was also on his mind. Birtwistle liked to lure a sustain from the harp, by letting the sound resonate. *Crowd* was commissioned by Kulturkreis der deutschen Wirtschaft im BDI e.V., and world-premiered by Antonia Schreiber in 2005.

Salvatore Sciarrino: L'addio a Tranchis (1979/80)

For harp

Salvatore Sciarrino (1947–), was born in Palermo, Italy, and is largely self-taught in composition. Since 1966 he has refined a different and personal style. Sciarrino studied visual arts before dedicating himself to music. He has taught at conservatories in Milan, Florence and Perugia, and has held numerous masterclasses. From 1978–1980, he was artistic director at the Teatro Comunale di Bologna. Since 1982, Sciarrino has lived in Città di Castello in Umbria. His body of work includes over 180 compositions, and more than 70 recordings of his music have been released. He has received many awards, among other the Golden Lion, Venice Biennale 2016, for his lifetime achievement.

L'addio a Trachis holds intense energy and restraint simultaneously. Sciarrino sought to sustain the harp's sound (to maintain the note), which he achieves through the use of trills (rapid alternation between two neighboring strings). Trills appear and disappear from sound zero. Sciarrino explores the sound's most intimate details and complexity, in a constant dialogue with movement and silence. His music can be almost inaudible; filled with pianissimos, breaths, murmurs, whispers, or only a hint of sound. Sciarrino's music is often described as sound poetry.

Trachis was a region in ancient Greece, south of Sperchios River, populated by Malians until 426 BC, when it became a Spartan colony and was renamed Herclea Trachinia. It was situated west of the island of Euboea and north of Delphi. In modern times, the area has seen much turbulence and is known for its history of resistance.

Ray Murray Schafer: The Crown of Ariadne (1979)

For harp with percussion

Ray Murray Schafer (1933–2021) was a Canadian composer, writer, visual artist, educator, researcher and environmentalist. He began his studies at the Royal Conservatory of Music and the University of Toronto in 1952 but left formal education in 1955 to pursue his own path. He lived in Europe for several years, immersing himself in literature, philosophy, language, visual/performing arts and writing. In 1961, he returned to Canada and established the *Ten Centuries Concert.*

He held teaching positions at Memorial University and Simon Fraser University, where he founded the World Soundscape Project. This project received international acclaim for its research on the relationship between people and their acoustic environments (sonic ecology). Schafer's writings on music education are now considered essential references for teachers, performers, and researchers worldwide.

Schafer encouraged exploring local culture and identity. Among his fascinations were ancient and modern cultures, and the use of myths and symbols in the modern world. He was also inspired by Eastern mysticism and quietism. After 1975, Schafer lived primarily on his farm in rural Canada. He received numerous awards, for both his music and his teaching.

Schafer is known for his work cycle *Patria* (Homeland); a music-theatre work in 12 parts, that he spent over 40 years creating.

In *Patria*, Schafer seeks to blend music, dance, theatre, myth, ritual, and the surrounding environment. *The Crown of Ariadne* is part of Patria V;

«My idea (for Patria) *was that two principal characters, a man and a woman, would engage in a search for one another through a labyrinth of different cultures and social twistings almost as if they represented the split halves of the same being...They might return with various guises and different names but the quest for unity and the homeland they were seeking would always be the same.»* Murray Schafer.

The Crown of Ariadne was composed for the harpist Judy Loman, who worked in Toronto Symphony Orchestra at the time. Around the same time as she asked Schafer to write a harp piece, Loman met Takemitsu, who was visiting Toronto. According to Loman, Takemitsu wished to compose a solo piece for harp that would include bells on the arms of the harpist. When Loman later met with Schafer to discuss the new piece, she suggested that the use of bells might be an interesting idea (full interview with Loman by Rødland at www.brage.unit.no—*Let the Harp Sound*).

In the piece, the harpist plays percussion simultaneously with the harp. From Ariadne's perspective, the myth of Ariadne, Theseus and the Minotaur unfolds. Ariadne was the daughter of King Minos of Crete, who sent young heroes into the Labyrinth to defeat the Minotaur- but none returned. Ariadne fell in love with Theseus, who was next in line to enter the Labyrinth. Tired of this cycle, she taught Theseus the layout of the Labyrinth



through a dance and gave him a red thread to guide him. With her help, Theseus defeated the Minotaur. The final movement ends with the two lovers embracing, before departing the island.

Kaija Saariaho: Fall (1979)

For harp and electronics

Kaija Saariaho (1952–2023) was a Finnish composer and leading voice of her generation, both in Finland and internationally. She studied in Helsinki, Leipzig and Paris, where she lived from 1982 until her passing. Saariaho's research at IRCAM, the Paris-based Institute for Research and Coordination in Acoustics/Music, played a central role in her compositions. Saariaho had a significant role in the development of electroacoustic music, contributing to software innovations that enabled real-time sound processing in live performances. Saariaho received numerous awards, and in 2019 she was named the «Greatest living composer» by her peers in *BBC Music Magazine*. Her life was cut short when she passed away in 2023.

Fall is the sixth movement (the second–to–last) of the ballet Maa, and was later published as an independent concert piece. *Maa* is a Finnish word meaning earth, country, or land. The ballet consists of seven movements, composed for seven musicians, and each movement can be divided into seven parts. *Maa* evolves around thematic archetypes such as doors, gates, entering new worlds, journeys, falling, and crossing waters. Both the scenography and the music are intentionally mysterious. *Maa* was commissioned by the Finnish National Opera, choreographed by Carolyn Carlson, and premiered in 1991.

Fall moves seamlessly between rhythms, timbres and harmonies, starting in the high register and gradually falling in pitch. The live harp activates programmed responses in the Max patch, creating multiple layers of sound. As the piece progresses, Saariaho increasingly asks for agitation and fierceness, culminating in «furioso con violenza», bringing the harp close to its breaking point.



Sunniva Rødland (1977)

Sunniva Rødland is a Norwegian harpist known for her artistic versatility, innovative spirit, and dedication to contemporary music. She holds a PhD in artistic research from the Norwegian Academy of Music, where she was part of the Norwegian Artistic Research Fellowship Program. Her doctoral work focused on expanding the utilization of the harp, also in collaboration with composers, resulting in new repertoire and new perspectives on the instrument.

Rødland is a sought-after performer on both national and international stages, having performed at major festivals such as the World Harp Congress (Vancouver), AngelicA (Bologna), and Ultima (Oslo). She has appeared as a soloist with ensembles including the Norwegian Radio Orchestra, the Norwegian Wind Ensemble, and the Trondheim Symphony Orchestra. Her debut solo album, Postures – Norwegian Harp Music, released on Lawo Classics in 2019, highlights her commitment to contemporary Norwegian repertoire.

Beyond traditional performance settings, Rødland is active in experimental and cross-disciplinary projects that

combine acoustic and electronic sound, improvisation, theatre, video, and installation art. Her work often explores the boundaries of the harp as an instrument and challenges established performance conventions.

In addition to her performance career, she is a dedicated educator and frequently teaches harp and contemporary music practices. She also plays an active role in shaping the Norwegian music scene through her involvement in various artistic boards and committees. Sunniva Rødland continues to be a pioneering force in redefining the role of the harp in contemporary music.



Musicians

Sunniva Rødland — Harp
Schott Music GmbH & Co KG — Orchestral material, track 1
Sunniva Rødland — Percussion, track 5–11
Asbjørn Blokkum Flø — Sound design, track 11

Credits

Recorded in Sofienberg Church,
Oslo, 21. April 2022, 4. April and 3. May 2025
Producer: Vegard Landaas
Balance engineer: Thomas Wolden
Editing: Vegard Landaas
Mastering: Thomas Wolden
Booklet notes: Sunniva Rødland
Booklet editor: Torgeir M. Landaas
Cover design: Anette L'orange-Blunderbuss
Artist photo: Sara Wettre

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When She Awakens

Toru Takemitsu (1930—1996)
01. Stanza II 06:15

John Cage (1912—1992)
02. In a Landscape 09:00

Harrison Birtwistle (1934—2022)
03. Crowd 08:58

Salvatore Sciarrino (1947—)
04. L'addio a Trachis 03:39

Ray Murray Schafer (1933—2021)
The Crown of Ariadne
05. Ariadne Awakens 03:59
06. Ariadne's Dance 02:12
07. Dance of the Bull 03:09
08. Dance of the Night Insects 04:43
09. Sun Dance 03:12
10. Labyrinth Dance (Theseus & Ariadne) 02:49

Kaija Saariaho (1952—2023)
11. Fall 06:40