



NADIA SIROTA

VIOLA/CURATOR/SPEAKER/PRODUCER



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Violist Nadia Sirota's career spans solo performances, chamber music, curation and broadcasting. In all branches of her artistic life she aims to open up classical music to a broader audience.

As a soloist, Nadia has appeared with acclaimed orchestras around the world, including Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Colorado Symphony, NAC Orchestra, Orquesta Nacional de España, and Orchestre national d'Île-de-France.

For the 2018/19 season, Nadia teams up with the New York Philharmonic as their first-ever Creative Partner, a position created for her.

Nadia is a recipient of a Peabody Award, broadcasting's highest honour, for her podcast, Meet the Composer, which deftly profiled some of the most interesting musical thinkers living today. "the world's best contemporary classical music podcast" (Pitchfork).

Nadia's singular sound and expressive execution have served as muse to dozens of composers, including Nico Muhly, Bryce Dessner, Missy Mazzoli, Daniel Bjarnason, Judd Greenstein, Marcos Balter, and David Lang.

To date, she has released four albums of commissioned music, most recently, Tessellatum, Donnacha Dennehy's groundbreaking work for viola and microtonal viola da gamba consort, featuring Liam Byrne. Nadia has also lent her sound to recording and concert projects by such artists as The National, Arcade Fire, and Grizzly Bear.

Nadia is a founding member of the acclaimed chamber sextet yMusic.



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RECITAL REPERTOIRE

Solo Recital

Nadia is able to do solo performance for viola and electronics. The programme for this is based around works from her two albums **Baroque** and **First Things First**.

Nico Muhly and Nadia

Programme TBC – selective dates only

James McVinnie and Nadia

Performed by Nadia Sirota (viola) and James McVinnie (organ, piano)

Paul Corley - Tristan Da Cunha (viola organ electronics) 10'

Philip Glass - Music in 5ths (organ) 10'

Nico Muhly - Twitchy Organs (viola, organ) 4'

Missy Mazzoli - Tooth and Nail (viola and electronics) 10'

Nico Muhly - Drones and Viola (viola, piano) 11'

Philip Glass - Etude 20 (piano) 10'

Nico Muhly - Keep In Touch (viola, organ, electronics) 12'



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ORCHESTRA REPERTOIRE

Works for Fully Symphony Orchestra

Nico Muhly Viola Concerto;

A project Nadia and Nico had envisioned together for ten years. This exceptional work contains references to their decade-plus musical collaboration.

Total running time approx.. 24 mins

Click [here](#) to see a clip of the concerto.

Owen Pallett — Five Women

Short concerto for solo viola and full symphony orchestra

Total running time approx..7 mins

String or Small Orchestra:

Judd Greenstein — In Teaching Others We Teach Ourselves

For solo viola plus 6 violas

Total running time approx.10 mins

Judd Greenstein — The Night Gatherers

For solo viola and string orchestra



Works for Chamber Orchestra

Nico Muhly — Keep In Touch

For solo viola and sinfonietta.

First piece Muhly ever wrote for Nadia Sirota.

N.B Ensemble also required to sing

Total running time approx. 13 mins

Donnacha Dennehy Tessellatum

A ground-breaking work for viola and microtonal viola da gamba consort, performed by violist Nadia Sirota and viola da gamba player Liam Byrne featuring animation by Steven Mertens.

Currently also in discussion to do two new versions:

One for viola, viola da gamba and string orchestra

One for viola and string orchestra

(Total running time approx.. 40 mins)

Daníel Bjarnason Sleep Variations for solo viola and orchestra:

Inspired by a Margaret Atwood poem, the work deploys string scrapes and harmonics along with tumbled harps and percussion to create a brooding, semi-conscious breathing effect. The viola inhabits this world as the narrator of the poem.

Exists as both solo viola string orchestra percussion and harp OR solo viola, 10 violas, percussion and harp)

New commissions

Marcos Balter (solo viola and chamber orchestra).

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'Meet the Composer' podcaster Nadia Sirota's triumphant return as the maven of classical music makers - Los Angeles Times, Catherine Womack, 08/01/2019

In the 1980s, while other kids plastered their bedroom walls with posters of Michael Jordan suspended in air mid-dunk or the dreamboats from *New Kids on the Block* showing off well-coiffed manes, Nadia Sirota decorated her room with heroes of a different sort: early 20th century modernist composers.

"I was obsessed with Benjamin Britten and Stravinsky when I was a little kid," the 36-year-old violist, curator and podcast host says. "Hindemith, too. I cut all three of their names out of construction paper and put them on my walls."

Sirota's musical taste evolved and expanded over the years, but her obsession with the lives and music of inventive, forward-looking composers never dissipated. Rather, it intensified and solidified into a clearly defined mission: to share contemporary classical music with the widest possible audience.

In pursuit of that goal, Sirota will appear onstage at the Theatre at Ace Hotel this Saturday night alongside composers Andrew Norman and Caroline Shaw and new music ensemble wild Up for the first iteration of "Living Music Live!"

Presented by Center for the Art of Performance at UCLA, this hybrid conversation-concert will draw audiences into the music and creative processes of Norman and Shaw, with wild Up performing demonstrations and excerpts and Sirota acting as musical sherpa and host.

The format and tone of "Living Music Live!" will feel familiar to fans of "Meet the Composer," the Peabody Award-winning podcast that Sirota created and hosted from 2014 to 2017 for New York Public Radio's Q2 Music, the online new music platform of WQXR that has since been rebranded as New Sounds.

Produced with her creative partner, Alex Overington, "Meet the Composer" featured the sort of densely layered, rich sound design that listeners expect from shows like "This American Life" or "Radiolab," an ideal format for delving into long-form musical compositions.

Each hourlong episode of "Meet the Composer" was a colorful sonic portrait of one living composer. Whether she was dissecting the complex structures of a piece like Norman's "Play" through the metaphor of video games or reveling in the expansive beauty of John Luther Adams' compositions through the imagery of the vast, barren Alaskan landscape he called home, Sirota's conversational approach to interviewing and storytelling, along with her unbridled enthusiasm for her subjects, imbued the show with an entertaining, informative, accessible tone that appealed to music aficionados and the randomly curious.

Composer Nico Muhly, Sirota's longtime friend, former Juilliard classmate and the subject of one "Meet the Composer" episode, said that when he listened to the podcast, the experience was similar to watching Sirota dissect and perform a new piece of music on her viola.



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"The podcast is like a slowed-down version of her ability to understand what is going on in a piece of music and communicate it to an audience," Muhly said. "For me, what is interesting is that sometimes the podcast sounds a lot like conversations Nadia and I would have in our day-to-day lives. When she and I speak about music, it's pretty much shoptalk. But she manages to communicate it in such a way that you'll totally get it even if you're not a musician."

Collaborating with composers and performing their music is a familiar experience for Sirota. At Juilliard, where she studied viola as an undergraduate and graduate student, she sought out composer friends like Muhly to write music for her, much of which she later recorded across four solo albums.

In high school, Sirota took composition lessons but found she preferred bringing her fellow composition students' musical creations to life in concerts over writing her own music.

And as a kid growing up in New England, Sirota was surrounded by composers and new music, and not just on her bedroom walls. Her father, Robert, is a composer; her older brother, Jonah, is a violist, chamber musician and composer.

Her mother was a church organist and choir director before she became an Episcopal priest.

Sirota likes to joke that proselytizing for new music feels like working for the "family business."

That business has led to fun opportunities for the instrumentalist and tastemaker: a cameo on Amazon's "Mozart in the Jungle"; brainstorming sessions with New York Philharmonic President and Chief Executive Deborah Borda and Music Director Jaap van Zweden as that orchestra's first "creative partner"; performing alongside Paul Simon with her ensemble yMusic on "Saturday Night Live" and on his farewell tour.

"Everything I do, all the different branches of my life that seem disparate, they all have a common goal," Sirota says. "It's about following joy. I feel like it's important to always have that thing that you're working on that is your passion project. For me, that is the podcast."

That passion project was a success, with monthly downloads reaching 10 times what a No. 1 classical album sells in a month, Sirota says. But it hit a snag.

In 2017, New York Public Radio underwent what Sirota describes as a "slight restructuring." Sirota was asked to re-pitch her show and start over with a new concept, something she was unwilling to do. Her mission and vision for the podcast were crystal clear, she said, and she wasn't interested in working on a version of the show she was less passionate about.

"This goal of making the audience for contemporary classical music larger, for me that is the thing," Sirota says. "It is what I'm most psyched about. I think in general one is a best advocate for the thing that they themselves like the most."

Sirota wanted to continue with "Meet the Composer," but she did not own any of the material she had created.

"I didn't own the name. I didn't own any of the content. New York Public Radio owned it all," she says. "In that moment I realized that I didn't need to ask someone's permission or wait for somebody else to tell me what I needed to do. I can be responsible for my own content and move forward."

And so Sirota, who now splits her time between New York and Los Angeles, where her fiancé is based, started her own production company (New Music Radio) and is producing her own new podcast, "Living Music With Nadia Sirota."

Much like "Meet the Composer," her new show will feature deep dives into the lives of composers, performers and conductors. To further expand audiences for the music she loves, she plans to record live concerts and release them as downloadable podcasts. And there will be live events, like this weekend's show at the Ace, which doubles as the launch party for her new podcast, episodes of which will be released this year.

"Ever since 'Meet the Composer' ended, I've been waiting for a new show to fill the niche it left behind," Joshua Barone wrote in the New York Times just last week. He's not alone, and thanks to Sirota's hustle and dedication to her mission, fans won't have to wait much longer.



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