

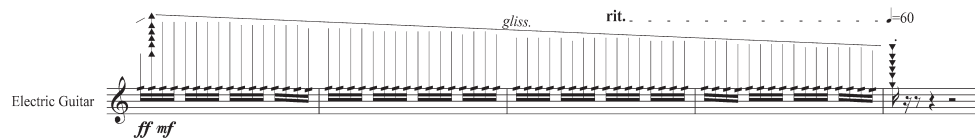
Mirela Ivičević *HEART CORE*



(repetitions always dpplz)



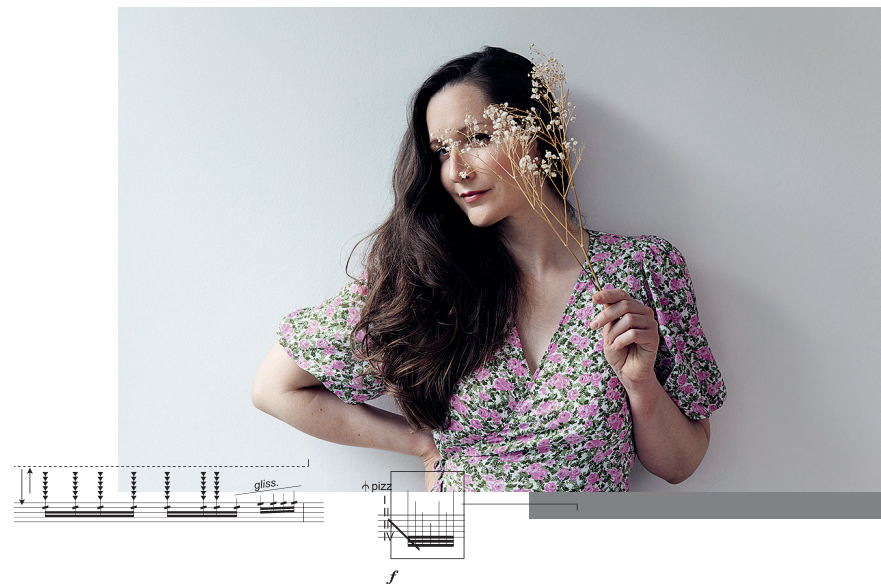
A musical score for a vocal part, featuring a photograph of a woman with long brown hair wearing a pink floral dress. The score is written on a single staff with a treble clef. It begins with a forte (*fff*) dynamic marking. The melody consists of several notes, with three specific passages marked with a 'v.' (vibrato) and 'gliss.' (glissando) annotation, each indicated by a pink arrow. The background of the photograph shows a blurred outdoor setting with buildings and a cloudy sky.



A musical score for an electric guitar part, written on a single staff with a treble clef. The score begins with a forte (*ff*) dynamic marking, which then transitions to a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The melody is characterized by a series of rapid, repeated notes, creating a dense texture. A 'gliss.' (glissando) annotation is present, followed by a 'rit.' (ritardando) marking. The score concludes with a tempo marking of 60 beats per minute, indicated by a quarter note with a '60' above it.

Mirela Ivičević

1. ***Sidra in the Sky with Diamonds / Rainbow Hoodie*** (2024) 09:07
for ensemble and electronics
Black Page Orchestra
Conductor: Friederike Scheunchen
 2. ***CASE BLACK*** (2016) 07:39
for ensemble and electronics
Black Page Orchestra
Conductor: Friederike Scheunchen
 3. ***HEART CORE*** (2022) 10:03
for ensemble
Black Page Orchestra
Conductor: Friederike Scheunchen
 4. ***Better Place (Angels Ascending)*** (2024) 12:04
for ensemble and electronics
United Instruments of Lucilin
Conductor: Julien Leroy
- Total length 38:53



Towards an Empathic Sonic Fiction On the Music of Mirela Ivičević

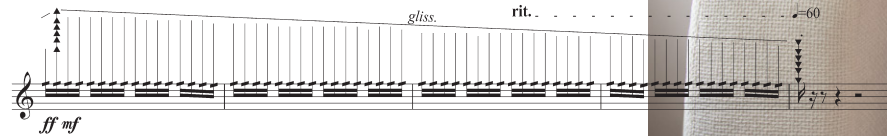
Mirela Ivičević's material is simply there. Her musical ideas need no introduction or development—they already speak for themselves. Every moment contains an entire adventure. This complete immersion in the present is something pop music has perfected: every segment of a song stands for the work as a whole. And like pop music, whose direct energy and aesthetic Ivičević shares in many respects, she has an extraordinary gift for transforming the most familiar sounds and discovering something deeply moving within them. She approaches her work with the same confidence that pop music brings to its own material. It requires neither a hegemonic order nor an abstract formal framework to be itself. It needs only the presence of the work's other materials, with which it forms relationships, develops an identity, and exchanges ideas—becoming, in a sense, social. From these interactions emerge dramaturgy, narrative, and meaning. Ivičević draws on this social potential to engage musically with the political and social issues that concern her. Much like science fiction writer Ursula K. Le Guin in her poetic manifesto *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*, she creates narratives in which heroic, teleological conflicts give way to a gathering of associations, digressions, contradictions, everyday elements,

and marginal details. These experiences are assembled from multiple perspectives and take shape in modular, episodic forms—through non-hierarchical coexistence rather than linear development or causal dramaturgy. This recontextualization of references reveals new perspectives on what was considered familiar. It is precisely here that Ivičević sees the possibility of making what was once opaque or hidden more readily understood—and more deeply felt.

This is a political stance. Her pluralism is a commitment to a world in which different identities can coexist without having to submit to one another. The same principle shapes her musical practice. In rehearsals and even in her scores, she offers performers numerous suggestions and questions, developing her works collaboratively with them. Their individual creativity, improvisational spirit, and energy are integral to the music itself. Perhaps this openness is rooted in her upbringing. She grew up in a multi-ethnic family in the former Yugoslavia, where cultural, religious, and class differences were simply part of everyday life; acceptance was a way of life. Pluralism thus comes naturally to her music: a vibrant exchange within what Shilla Strelka has called “hyperactive structures.” The focus is not on contrasts or differences themselves, but on the way musical material communicates across them, forging connections through subtle harmonic relationships, rhythmic structures, affinities of timbre, hypnotically looping figures, insistent ticking, and, above all, Ivičević's remarkable

8^{va}

Electric Guitar



orchestration—at once precise and playful. Even with smaller ensembles, she creates expansive orchestral worlds of beauty, humor, transgression, and courage. She weaves effortlessly between sweeping cinematic gestures and tumultuous noise. The sophistication of her writing keeps the music transparent even in its densest passages while preserving its groove in the most chaotic ones. The audience is never overwhelmed. There is always room for individual imagination and personal association. In this way, a living, multifaceted network of relationships emerges, one carefully sheltered by the composer—a safe space for material, ideas, and the work itself. By approaching her material with empathy, she extends that same empathy to her listeners.

Empathy has increasingly become the defining element of Ivičević's compositional practice. The four works on this recording respond to the shattering experience of war and isolation, encountered both through the media and in her own life. Her compositional impulse draws equally on sonic impressions and human relationships. Together, they give rise to utopian counter-images to a brutal reality: a plea for our shared humanity, for resonance and mutual awareness, and for an everyday resistance that seeks to imagine other ways of living together. What Ivičević once described as "sonic fiction"—the creation of alternative realities from lived experience and the sonic impressions of reality—has, in these works, evolved into an "empathetic sonic fiction."

For Sidra Hassouna,

child goddess,

rainbow fairy,

muse of flickering sounds.

Sidra in the Sky with Diamonds / Rainbow Hoodie, Mirela Ivičević (2024)

In *Sidra in the Sky with Diamonds / Rainbow Hoodie* (2024), this empathy is directed toward seven-year-old Sidra Hassouna, who was killed alongside her family in an Israeli airstrike on Rafah in the Gaza Strip on February 12, 2024. A photograph of her lifeless body shocked the world. Equally widespread, however, was a photograph of Sidra smiling into the camera in a rainbow-colored hoodie. It offers a fleeting glimpse of who she was. Starting from that image, Ivičević attempts to approach Sidra's imagination through her own and to translate that process into music.

The work opens with a shimmering portal, poised between piercing sharpness and radiant light—the very moment we step into a world of imagination. From the pulsing confines of the Gaza Strip, a mysterious, iridescent world unfolds, turned toward the sea. Clicking woodblocks dart across coral seas alongside trilling flute and bass clarinet, while vibraphone, piano, strings, and electronics populate this world with strange creatures and fantastical automatons. Like *Alice in Wonderland*, the music carries us between immense and microscopic worlds, allowing us to converse with whales as readily as with plankton. It is a world without bombs or monsters. Even the bass drum sheds its menace and becomes the sound of adventure, while Ivičević's characteristically grotesque mechanical loops take on the quality of gleefully repeated magic spells. Here Ivičević places her complete trust in the

imagination, drawing on vivid memories of her own childhood and her love of the sea in an attempt to return to Sidra the world that was taken from her.

Only at the very end does reality return. At first, it does so gently, in the form of a calm, unadorned flute melody—a bridge between dream and reality. Here Ivičević quotes a traditional Dalmatian folk song, customarily sung by a Klapa, a male a cappella vocal ensemble, at funerals. It begins with the line: "My song, rush there, where my angel has their home." Then comes the extradiegetic rupture. We hear the voice of five-year-old Hind Rajab. During an attack in Gaza in which nearly her entire family was killed, she called the Palestinian Red Crescent while trapped inside a car, pleading to be rescued. Ivičević incorporates the recording into the work without alteration. No recording of Sidra's voice exists; Hind's voice thus becomes a real document, grounding the imagined journey in a concrete human reality and giving the search for empathy one final, inescapable impulse.

The title, too, takes on an additional meaning: in Croatian and Serbian, *sidra* also means "anchor." Perhaps, the composer suggests, our compassion for Sidra can become an anchor for our own humanity.

Raw
 Random
 Suddenly each other's
 Miraculously co-existing
 Shining
 Unstoppable
 Towards the same goal
it's easy if you try
 lets try
 SFSN

*In loving memory of Grandpa Ivičević and Grandpa Davidović,
 my two favorite resistance fighters.
 May we all be blessed with the world you fought for.*

CASE BLACK, written in 2016, takes its title from the so-called *Fall Schwarz* of the spring of 1943—one of the largest offensives launched by the fascist Axis powers, Germany and Italy, together with their allies Bulgaria and the short-lived Croatian puppet state, the Independent State of Croatia (NDH), against Tito's Yugoslav Partisans. In Dalmatia and Bosnia, this defensive struggle remains deeply embedded in the region's cultural memory and, for Ivičević, forms part of her own family history. Among the Partisans who lost their lives was her Croatian grandfather. At the same time, she understands *CASE BLACK* as a response to the resurgence of nationalism and historical revisionism in present-day Croatia and beyond—to a political climate in which the memory of antifascist resistance is increasingly marginalized while nationalist narratives regain influence.

In *CASE BLACK*, Ivičević translates the organizational principles of the Partisan movement—their hidden networks of communication, their emotions, friendships, love, and the solidarity that united people of vastly different backgrounds in pursuit of a common goal—into a compositional idea. For years she has been preoccupied with the question of how different things can coexist without surrendering their individuality. This vision of solidaristic coexistence forms the true core of the work.

The beginning reveals a harsh terrain of crackling artifacts, nervous ticking, jagged piano clusters, and ominously rumbling electronics.

Frantic runs repeatedly race through the music like threads woven into a fabric. Gradually, the landscape begins to settle, and distinct individual voices emerge. Vertically, Ivičević constructs deliberately unbalanced chords that preserve the individuality of each instrumental line. Horizontally, she places electronic sounds alongside eruptive outbursts and fragile moments, static sound fields, echoes of suspense-film scores, and noise-like textures. The different materials remain clearly recognizable as such, yet together they converge toward a shared musical direction.

The work concludes with an arrangement of *La Complainte du partisan*, the French Resistance song composed in 1943 by the Russian-French composer Anna Marly and later made famous through Leonard Cohen. Ivičević first encountered the song on a record her father gave her; this, too, is part of her family history. She deliberately chose an internationally recognizable symbol of antifascist resistance, placing local memory of historical struggle into a universal context.



Following

each other.

*Meeting
in the middle.*

*Hugging each other tightly,
against all odds.*

Pushing away, _____ only to pull back again.

*A big party in a small apartment
(there's a balcony).*

A narrow space where they keep becoming one.

HEART CORE was written in 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic—a time when closeness had suddenly become dangerous. Rather than exploring distance, Mirela Ivičević turns to its opposite: What happens when different beings come into close proximity? How does perception change when two bodies, two voices, or two timbres begin to share the same space? The work tells of meeting one another halfway, embracing, parting again, and finding one another once more. It evokes the image of a large party in an apartment far too small to contain it: a confined space in which difference continually gives rise to new forms of living together.

This idea is reflected directly in the instrumentation: saxophone, trumpet, trombone, percussion, piano, accordion, and cello—instruments whose contrasting timbres and dynamic ranges conventional orchestration would normally keep separate or bring together only with deliberate care. Ivičević does the opposite. Again and again, she compresses the instruments into a shared, tightly confined frequency range. Individual voices repeatedly gravitate toward unison without ever fully reaching it—and not without friction. Each instrument retains its own voice, its own sound, its own way of speaking, while nevertheless seeking contact with the others. In this non-hierarchical environment, no instrument pushes another to the margins, and no voice permanently dominates the rest.

HEART CORE is, in the truest sense, a work for ensemble: the instruments adopt one another's gestures and articulations, transform them, and respond in turn. Fleeting encounters develop into relationships that dissolve again, only to continue in new constellations. Each instrument seems to attempt to hear the world from the perspective of another—to perceive that other's particular character and move closer to it.

The result is an extraordinarily vital sonic world. For Ivičević, intimacy is not necessarily quiet or delicate; it can be just as intense, loud, and full of energy. The music seems to tremble with nervous energy. Repeated figures, nervous impulses, and brief gestures resemble tentative touches, curious glances, or cautious approaches. Wherever people—or sounds—come this close to one another, even the slightest movement takes on significance. Here, intimacy becomes an amplifier: every gesture, every shift in timbre, every retreat and renewed approach becomes immediately audible. For Ivičević, the utopia of pluralistic coexistence begins not with grand political programs, but with the attentive perception of the other.

Little angels.

From every stab of unbearable pain
 a shining feather emerges from
 their tiny,
 tormented bodies,
 a down for each cut of the soul.

Blown off,
 dissolving faces and limbs
 mold into new sparkling ethereal forms
 whose beauty transcends
 the power of words.
 All too soon,
 they are ready
 to ascend.

Baby angel

Fatima
 (ascended from
 Srebrenica, 1993)
 is sleeping
 peacefully in her crib.

Anne

(ascended from Bergen-Belsen, 1945)
 welcomes them one by one into her warm,
 comforting arms.
 Her magical embrace
 erases painful memories
 and makes space
 for better ones.
 Rainbows,
 glitter,
 warmth,
 the scent of fennel tea.
 The sound of thousands of tender wings
 fluttering—every child's dream.
 She reads them stories she had written,
 a happy ending
 for each
 and every angel.

Leah

(ascended on the way
 to Auschwitz, 1943)
 is a bit restless,
 eager to show her new brothers
 and sisters
 all the coolest step moves.

Lunch is soon.

My little Auntie

Desa
 (ascended from Jasenovac, 1942)
 is cooking fish stew
 for her newly arrived
 fellow Mediterraneans.
 The scent of olive oil,
 rosemary, garlic.
 Nobody is complaining
 about garlic.

Hind

(ascended from Gaza, 2024)
 always dreamed
 of becoming a dancer—
 she and Leah
 are a match
 made in heaven.

Aleksandra

(ascended from Zagreb, 1991)
 has made sarma.
 She tweaked her Mom's recipe
 so that it's both kosher and halal.
 She made a vegan version, too.
 Thousands of angels,
 from all over the world.
 Eating together, dancing together,
 playing together, dreaming
 together, standing together—
 eternally united
 in love and innocence.

A better place—they are all there.
 You and I, my friend, however,
 might not make it.

The point of departure for ***Better Place (Angels Ascending)*** from 2024 is a short fable written by the composer herself, in which children from different times and cultures—victims of war, genocide, and violence—come together in a peaceful place. As in the music for *Sidra*, luminous registers, sweetly shimmering timbres, and exquisitely crafted instrumental details dominate the soundscape. Here, however, everything feels even more ethereal. The music unfolds through comparatively few contrasts and largely dispenses with the collage-like references that characterize much of Ivičević's earlier work. Yet its title suggests a subtle dramaturgy that might unfold something like this:

From spacious chords of distinctly Vivier-like beauty, stumbling over grace notes, gently varied processes emerge, gradually opening up and leading step by step toward a new sonic landscape. It is as though the newly born music is learning how to move. Little by little, the textures thicken and blossom into melodic motifs in the flute and saxophone, as if feathers were beginning to grow and angelic wings were slowly taking shape. The strings evoke the soft down of young wings and the turbulent excitement of first attempts at flight. It is an eager exploration of the world, carried by a bittersweet melody that carries the music through

gusts of wind into ever more luminous sonic spaces. The highest registers begin to chirp—a heavenly “better place,” alive with every imaginable form of life. Toward the end, the music resolves into radiant A major before finally returning to its beginning—as though it now wished to teach us how to fly.

This music carries hope because it refuses to relinquish the idea of a better world. In doing so, it stands against the murder of reality that the death of children represents, and, through artistic imagination, reaches beyond pain.



19

[illegible]

Mirela Ivičević

Born in Split in 1980, Mirela Ivičević studied composition and music theory at the Zagreb Music Academy with Željko Brkanović, media composition and applied music with Klaus-Peter Sattler in Vienna, and composition with Beat Furrer in Graz. Her music is characterized by extreme contrasts of material, from blocks of noise and pop-cultural references to delicate structures carrying reminiscences of maritime phenomena and musical folklores of the Balkans that have shaped the beginning of her sonic journey. Focusing on sound's capacity to challenge existing systems and convey meta-musical ideas, her oeuvre spans from electroacoustic, intermedia, and music theater works to several orchestral works that have been performed worldwide. She collaborated with ensembles and orchestras, including Klangforum Wien, Ensemble Recherche, LUX:NM, RSO Wien, MKO, SWR and WDR Symphonieorchester, Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin; BBC SSO and many more.

She is one of the co-founders of the Viennese Black Page Orchestra and a current artistic director of Bludenzer Tage zeitgemäßer Musik. She received, among others, the Josip Štolcer Slavenski Award for the music theatre work *PLANET 8*, the Erste Bank Composition Prize, and the Belmont Prize for contemporary music. In 2019, she was a fellow of the DAAD Artists-in-Berlin Program. In 2021, Mirela Ivičević was awarded the Ernst von Siemens Composer Prize. She lives and works in Vienna.

Scraping up and down all strings with the bottom of a little schnaps glass (will bring and show), going from the lowest to the first 3/4, and then eventually to the end of the plucking area. Mild dist./overdrive on to get lots of harmonics. Rubato, rythm doesn't have to be precise.

gliss.

ppp

Black Page Orchestra

28

Black Page Orchestra, founded in 2014 in Vienna, is an ensemble for radical and uncompromising music of current times. Named after the composition *The Black Page* by Frank Zappa, an almost black page due to the high density of notes, the ensemble has, over the past decade, set significant new aesthetic impulses within Vienna's contemporary music scene, introducing numerous international composers as well as local composers and artists of the youngest generation whose work lies at the intersection of music, technology, performance, and media art.

In addition to numerous guest performances (including at Märzmusik Berlin, Warsaw Autumn, PAN Festival Seoul, Mixtur Barcelona, Music Current Dublin, Ultraschall Berlin, Wien Modern, Wiener Festwochen, ImPulsTanz), the ensemble has been presenting its own concert series in the Gläserner Saal of the Musikverein since 2020.

Friederike Scheunchen

29

Friederike Scheunchen is a German conductor in the field of opera, orchestra, and contemporary and experimental projects. She works internationally with a wide range of orchestras and ensembles. As a specialist in contemporary music, she has premiered more than 350 works. Currently, she is working as conductor and assistant to André de Ridder at Theater Freiburg, where she also appears as a guest conductor. She has conducted Ensemble Modern, Stuttgarter Philharmoniker, Ensemble Musikfabrik, Klangforum Wien, Junge Deutsche Philharmonie, Ensemble Resonanz, Ensemble Recherche, Ensemble Ascolta, Bundesjugendorchester, Freiburger Barockorchester, SWR Vokalensemble, and many others. She has appeared at venues and festivals such as the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Laeiszhalle Hamburg, Konzerthaus Wien, Konzerthaus Freiburg, Oper Frankfurt, Festspielhaus Baden-Baden, Harvard University, Taschenopernfestival Salzburg, Wittener Tage für Neue Kammermusik, Donaueschinger Musiktage, Moers Festival, impuls Festival Graz, Davos Festival, Bludenzer Tage zeitgemäßer Musik, Museum Tinguely Basel, ORF Studios, Podium Festival Esslingen, Gare du Nord Basel, ECLAT Festival Stuttgart, PANTOPIA Festival Berlin, FRAU MUSICA NOVA Festival, SPARK Festival Cologne, and many more.

United Instruments of Lucilin

30

United Instruments of Lucilin is a contemporary music ensemble founded in Luxembourg in 1999, creating and performing in their home country as well as internationally.

As an ensemble, Lucilin is driven by principles of curiosity and experimentation: we work in close collaboration with artists and composers, so as to explore the full scope of what contemporary music has to offer. We believe that creation involves examining the way music is experienced and shared, which is why we experiment with different formats, seeking ever new ways to bring music, artists and audiences together.

We approach contemporary music with open-mindedness and a sense of adventure, these human traits that allow us to grow creatively, bring new ideas to life, and make our way towards what music can become.

Julien Leroy

31

Julien Leroy started his career working as Assistant Conductor of the Opéra de Paris and the Ensemble intercontemporain with Susanna Mälkki and Matthias Pintscher. In 2014, he was awarded the ADAMI 'Talents Chefs d'Orchestre' Prize. Numerous engagements with orchestras in France, such as the Orchestre National de Metz, Orchestre Symphonique de Mulhouse, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Orchestre National de Lille, and Orchestre National d'Île de France followed, the latter of which he is a regular guest. Abroad, Julien Leroy has been invited to conduct the Orchestre de la Suisse-Romande, Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, Ottawa National Arts Centre Orchestra, Arturo Toscanini Philharmonic, Gulbenkian Foundation Orchestra in Lisbon, the Beirut Philharmonic Orchestra, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, as well as the orchestra of the Lucerne Festival Academy. With the Ensemble intercontemporain, he has appeared in Brussels (BOZAR), Lisbon (Gulbenkian Foundation) and toured Mexico, Germany, Poland and Italy. In 2025, he was appointed as First Guest Conductor with the Ensemble United Instruments of Lucilin in Luxembourg. He is also Artistic Director of the Paris Percussion Group since 2014. Recent highlights include the premiere of *Kein Licht*, an opera by Philippe Manoury, at the Opera-Comique, which was a co-production of Ruhrtriennale, Berliner Festspiele, Luxembourg Theaters, Zagreb National Croatian Theatre, Festival Musica and IRCAM, a concert in tribute to Pierre Boulez at the KKL in Luzern, and his debut with Klangforum Wien.



Imprint

34

Production: Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation

Foundation Board: Tabea Zimmermann (Chairwoman), Ferdinand von Siemens (Vice Chairman), Elisabeth Bourqui, Eric Fellhauer, Elisabeth Oltramare, Herbert Scheidt, Christoph von Seidel, Christian Wildmoser

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Secretary of the Curatorium: Björn Gottstein

Co-produced by Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation and Prospero Classical

35

Production Management: Björn Gottstein
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evs-musikstiftung.ch
prospero-classical.com

*Sidra in the Sky with Diamonds/
Rainbow Hoodie (2024)*
for ensemble and electronics

Black Page Orchestra
Elena Gabbrielli, flute
Teresa Doblinger, bass clarinet
Luca Lavuri, piano
Igor Gross, percussion
Fani Vovoni, violin
Leo Morello, violoncello

Conductor: Friederike Scheunchen
Recording: ORF RadioKulturhaus Vienna, Studio 3 –
January 28 and 29, 2025
Recording producer
& digital editing: Jens Jamin
Balance engineer: Martin Leitner
Executive producer: Elke Tschakner



CASE BLACK (2016)
for ensemble and electronics

Black Page Orchestra
Elena Gabbrielli, bass flute, piccolo
Teresa Doblinger, bass clarinet
Igor Gross, percussion
Luca Lavuri, piano
Ruben Mattia Santorsa, electric guitar
Fani Vovoni, violin
Leo Morello, violoncello

Conductor: Friederike Scheunchen
Recording: ORF RadioKulturhaus Vienna, Studio 3 – January 28 and 29, 2025
Recording producer
& digital editing: Jens Jamin
Balance engineer: Martin Leitner
Executive producer: Elke Tschakner



HEART CORE (2022)
for ensemble

Black Page Orchestra
Yukiko Krenn, soprano saxophone
Spiros Laskaridis, trumpet
Pablo Marin-Reyes, trombone
Igor Gross, percussion
Luca Lavuri, piano
Bojana Popovicki, accordeon
Leo Morello, violoncello

Conductor: Friederike Scheunchen
Recording: ORF RadioKulturhaus Vienna, Studio 3 –
January 28 and 29, 2025

Recording producer
& digital editing: Jens Jamin
Balance engineer: Martin Leitner
Executive producer: Elke Tschakner



Better Place (Angels Ascending) (2024)
for ensemble and electronics

United Instruments of Lucilin
André Pons-Valdès, violin
Ingrid Schoenlaub, violoncello
Sophie Deshayes, flute
Olivier Sliepen, saxophone
Galdric Subirana, percussion
Pascal Meyer, piano

Conductor: Julien Leroy
Recording: Unison Studios, Luxembourg – October 4, 2024
Recording producer: Cédric Fischer
Executive producer: Floriane Weber



A musical staff with a single note on the first line. A diagonal line with an arrowhead points upwards from the note, labeled "gliss.".



let ring



w powr



let n

dampen the strings as high as possible and
tap on their surface randomly.
you should get dry little sounds

 dampen the strings as high as possible and tap on their surface randomly, you should get dry little sounds

