

## Maria Mölder (Sirp magazine)

Q: You did an unusually explicit interview with composer and your former teacher Georg Friedrich Haas. I guess people in contemporary music field usually are not so open to talk about their private lives nor their political or religious views. Why do you think it is that way and do you see any changes in this behaviour?

A: If you compare the artists of different disciplines, let's say visual artists or dance artists or theatre/performance artists with musicians, it appears the classical musicians are much more reserved and held-back than the peers of other arts. A lot of it has to do with the education of music.

Classical musicians are normally trained in a conservatoire, and conservatoires as the name suggests are very conservative institutions. I know some colleagues won't like me saying these things publicly, exactly for the same reason! Our music education system has barely changed from that of Mozart and Beethoven's time. Everything else has changed, the society, the technology, the instruments, but the conservatoires are still using the same methods and even the same exercises as in 18<sup>th</sup> century. In fact music has been treated like a religion, closely guarded by its guardians: masters!

You enter the conservatoire as a pupil (not student) of one master and stick with that for life, discouraged of seeking any other way of thinking or approach, or even questioning. There is only one right way and that is what the master says, and his master before him and so on. There is almost zero tolerance for the other masters even, let alone things that are new or different. New is scary, much like a religion system. It's all about hierarchy of power. The stories of abuse and mistreatment are often whispered in such environments, and yet being kept away from society's attention.

This extends to the music industry, if you want to work and live as a musician, or composer, this is what it is. The same people and the same hierarchy.

There are other sides to this story too of course. One for example is that composers specially are much more depended on the others. We live off the grace of governments and tax-payers, and composers live off the grace of musicians too. So you'd want to avoid having any opinion about anything that might upset anyone!

The material of music gives the perfect hideout too! When you see a nude portrait or an intimate play, it's so out there and can't be hidden. But music is secretive for the seeker! This gives the pretense for holiness in music. You always see these *holier than thou* masters, as if they have no earthly urges or needs. While the very reason they are known and famous is through very earthly promotion and advertisement and business plans. This is wrong!

Classical musicians rarely get engaged in any public discussion that matters to society; about politics or religion or sexuality for example or any other controversial subject. Situation is somewhat better for contemporary musicians. They are more open and more vocal, as they're use to rebel against norms to some degree. I hope they be more open sexually and politically too. But to finally answer your question, no I don't see any apparent or visible change on this behavior yet. You could measure the change by the reactions to this very interview and see if it's becoming more open or not!