

Mete Sakpınar (1954)

Contemporary Turkish composer Mete Sakpınar was born in Ankara in 1954, into a musical family of opera singers. He first started piano lessons with his mother at the age of five, and later studied solfege and harmony with Firuzan Saydam. At the age of 21, he enrolled at the Ankara State Conservatory where he studied harmony, counterpoint, and fugue with Ercivan Saydam and piano with Gulay Ugurata. At 24, he was accepted to Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University Istanbul State Conservatory to study composition with Ilhan Usmanbas. Following his graduation, he went to Paris to study both conducting with Dominique Roitz and Gerard Devos, and composition with Tony Aubin and Jacques Casterede. In 1984, he went to the United States and founded the New York Concertante Orchestra where he was the conductor and artistic director until 1986. During this same time in New York, he entered the Juilliard School of Music to earn his Master's degree in composition with Milton Babbitt and electronic music with Donald Howe. He received his doctorate at the Istanbul University.

During his time in the U.S., his compositions began to be performed by the Juilliard Symphony, Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, National Public Radio, Chicago Film Festival, and Ankara Contemporary Music Festival. His compositions have since been performed throughout Turkey, Europe, Canada, Australia, and the United States. He takes his inspiration from traditional Turkish music, French music, American folk songs and jazz, and electronic music. In his music, he combines elements of tonality, twelve-tone systems, and improvisations. He also believes that today's composers must benefit from all modern available sources and force the performance ability and instrument's capacities.

—Program note by Gözde Çakır

Reference:

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