

Žibuoklė Martinaitytė

CATHARSIS (2021)

for symphony orchestra

Once in a while the time comes when we experience so many new and previously unknown emotions that we can hardly verbalize them. This can only be done from a certain perspective of time. The piece CATHARSIS emerged at a very unusual time after living a year with the pandemic and still not seeing any clear future. A lot of inner experiences had accumulated over the year and I wanted to unravel this emotional tangle.

The idea of catharsis - as the purification from the emotions in order to experience an elevated state, proved to be extremely appropriate. Catharsis is a Greek word, meaning purification. It applies to both artistic and religious contexts, where a certain moral or physical violation has to be cleansed through various ritualized actions. This idea is also close to the medical concept of catharsis or purification. Religious and moral transgressions have been associated with disease, so cleansing means getting rid of the disease or expelling it. The plague and pandemics were attributed to a collective behavior that violated the laws of nature.

The idea of catharsis in art is analogous. The Greek philosopher Aristotle argued that purification and healing can also be achieved through art. In his work *Politics*, the catharsis of music is explained as follows: "For every feeling that affects some souls violently, affects all souls more or less; the difference is only one of degree. Take pity and fear, for example, or again enthusiasm. Some people are liable to become possessed by the latter emotions, but we see that, when they have made use of the melodies which fill the soul with orgiastic feeling, they are brought back by these sacred melodies to a normal conditions as if they had been medically treated and undergone a purge [catharsis]."

Purification is a ritualistic act and in this case, it is a musical journey through which we seek to purify ourselves from strong emotions, first experiencing them very intensely and finally allowing them to dissolve and give way to a calmer, more harmonious state of being.