

biography

Canadian composer of Ukrainian descent Marc Sabat (*1965) has been based in Berlin since 1999. He makes pieces for concert and installation settings, drawing inspiration from investigations of the sounding and perception of Just Intonation and relating to various music forms—folk, experimental and classical. He is a frequent collaborator, seeking interactions with other musicians and with artists of visual and literary modes to find points of shared exploration and dialogue between various forms of experience and different cultural traditions. His works are presented internationally. Sabat studied composition, violin and mathematics at the University of Toronto, at the Juilliard School in New York, and at McGill University, as well as working privately with Malcolm Goldstein, James Tenney and Walter Zimmermann. Together with Wolfgang von Schweinitz he developed the Extended Helmholtz-Ellis JI Pitch Notation and is a pioneer of music written and performed in microtonal Just Intonation. He teaches composition and the theory and practice of intonation at the Universität der Künste Berlin. Creative commons scores and artist editions are available from Plainsound Music Edition (<https://www.plainsound.org>).

youtube

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKz9OLT3yZQpXPaxEkuMEg>

studies

- 1982–86 • University of Toronto (Bachelor of Music; studies in composition, violin, mathematics)
- 1987–8 • Juilliard School of Music, New York (Master of Music; studies in violin, contemporary music)
- 1989 • Banff Centre for the Arts, Canada (winter cycle residency, various master classes)
- 1991 • studies in computer music and composition at McGill University (Montreal, Canada)
- 2008–9 • postgraduate fellow of the Graduiertenschule für die Künste und die Wissenschaften, UdK Berlin

residencies

- 1997–8 • composer at Akademie Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart (Germany)
- 1999 • Canada Council grant to reside and work in Berlin
- 2006–7 • five months at the Herrenhaus Edenkoben
- 2010 • three months at the Villa Aurora (Los Angeles)
- 2011 • one-year residency at the German Academy Villa Massimo (Rome)

guest lectures, workshops, teaching

- 1997 • University of Victoria (Canada)
- 1999 • Musikhochschule Münster (Germany)
- 2000–1 • Hochschule der Künste Berlin (Germany)
- 2001 • California Institute of the Arts (USA)
- 2004–6 • Universität der Künste Berlin (Germany)
- 2005 • HfM Hanns Eisler (Berlin, Germany); Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya (Barcelona, Spain); Hochschule für Musik und Theater Hamburg (Germany)
- 2008–9 • Conservatoire de Paris (France)
- 2010 • University of California Santa Barbara; CNMAT, University of California Berkeley (USA)
- 2012 • Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts (Brno, Czech Republic)
- 2014 • Banff Centre School of Fine Arts (Canada); University of Victoria (Canada)
- 2016 • HfMTM Hannover (Germany)
- 2018 • Columbia University New York, class of Georg Friedrich Haas (USA)
- 2019 • Liszt Academy Budapest (Hungary)

teaching positions

- 2006–7 • guest professor of composition at the California Institute of the Arts
- 2007–15 • Lehrauftrag in Composition (8 hours) at the Universität der Künste Berlin (Seminars, Hauptfach)
- 2012 • moderation of the Ringvorlesung “Intonation” (guest lecture series, workshops, concerts) for klangzeitort, Institut für Neue Musik der HfM Hanns Eisler und UdK Berlin
- 2015– • künstlerische Mitarbeiter at the Universität der Künste Berlin (teaching Hauptfach Composition: mentorship of individual students; seminars on theory and practice of composition; organisation of guest lectures, projects and workshops through klangzeitort; personal research focus exploring microtonally extended just intonation and other tone systems)
- 2017–19 • composition faculty (lector), biennial Ostrava Days / Ostrava New Music Center (Czech Republic), including performances of large ensemble and orchestral works with Ostravska Banda (2017) and ONO (Ostrava New Orchestra, cond. Johannes Kalitzke) (2019)

brief chronology of artistic projects

- 1990– • Newfoundland: discovering Harry Partch's *Genesis of a Music* and Helmholtz' *On the Sensations of Tone as a Physiological Basis for the Theory of Music* began autodidactic researches into just intonation
- 1991–2 • Montreal: work with violinist-composer Malcolm Goldstein on experimental improvisation
• music/film collaborations co-produced with Peter Sabat
- 1992–7 • Toronto: developed a version of Partch's adapted viola
• co-founded microtonal ensemble *Critical Band*, performances of American experimental music
• first compositions working with intonation (see Worklist); collaboration with John Oswald
• various ensemble projects, concerts and tours: ARRAYMUSIC, Sabat/Clarke; Modern Quartet
- 1997–8 • Stuttgart: residency at Akademie Schloss Solitude, (juror: Christian Wolff)
• collaborations and performances with Matteo Fargion, Chiyoko Szlavnic, Stephen Clarke;
performances at major festivals including Eclat, Darmstadt, June in Buffalo
- 1999–
2000– • moved to Berlin
• collaboration with Wolfgang von Schweinitz: founding of PLAINSOUND MUSIC EDITION, development of the Helmholtz-Ellis JI Pitch Notation, ongoing research into Just Intonation
• co-organised the Festival Neue Stimmungen 'One does not find free vibrating air just anyplace' (Musikinstrumenten-Museum, Philharmonie Berlin)
- 2002 • video/music collaboration with Peter Sabat presented as installation at MaerzMusik (2004)
• established Plainsound Orchestra (Berlin), ensemble for intonation research and new music
- 2003 • Plainsound Orchestra: portrait concert of music by Marc Sabat (Reihe 0, Schwarzenberg, Austria)
- 2004–6 • research into valve tunings of brass instruments; collaborations with Robin Hayward
- 2006 • residency at Herrenhaus Edenkoben, first collaborations with visual artist Lorenzo Pompa
• performances and recordings for mode with Aki Takahashi (piano) and Rohan de Saram (cello)
- 2007 • sculpture/music work (Pompa/Sabat) commissioned to open the Donaueschinger Musiktage
• video/music work (Peter Sabat/Marc Sabat) presented at Carnegie Hall, New York
- 2008–9 • began development of software instrument (Micromæloleon)
- 2009 • video ballet (Pompa/Sabat) presented at the KlankKleurFestival Amsterdam
• collaboration with text performer Wolfgang Betke, premiered at Festival Mouvement, Saarbrücken
- 2010 • CD release *wave piano scenery player* (World Edition)
• Pompa/Sabat sculpture/edition exhibited at the Akademie der Künste Hanseatenweg, Berlin
- 2011 • residency in Rome at the Accademia Tedesca Villa Massimo; various projects including concert at Museo Casa Scelsi, composer portrait at Villa Massimo, and final concert with Ensemble Modern
• Portrait concert, ISCM Basel (complete works for piano solo played by Daan Vandewalle)
• Pompa/Sabat performances at The Stone, New York; LP dubplate edition *Loss / Gain*
- 2012 • composition/premiere (Bludenzer Tage zeitgemäßer Musik) of work for Ensemble Contrechamps; begins series of larger ensemble pieces
- 2014 • Double portrait with Alexander Moosbrugger, IGNM Linz
• LP release *Les Duresses* (care of editions, Berlin)
- 2015 • solo contrabass work commissioned by musica viva, Bayerischer Rundfunk München
• first collaborations with JACK Quartet
• studio recordings of new works in Berlin and ORF Wien
- 2016 • New York premiere of *Euler Lattice Spirals Scenery* (JACK Quartet, NY Phil @ 92nd Street Y)
• installation/performance (Sabat/Mareike Lee) at Kunst-Werke Berlin, 30 April 2016
- 2017 • premiere (Festival Ultraschall, Berlin) by Sonar Quartett and Ensemblekollektiv Berlin
• CD release *Harmony* (another timbre), concert in Cafe Oto London
- 2018 • premiere (BBC Tectonics festival, Glasgow) of *The Luminiferous Aether*
- 2019 • portrait festival in Berlin ("Chords, melodies" at KM28); portrait concert in Budapest (Trafo)

selected editions and recordings

- 1998 • Marc Sabat: *Field Recordings* (compilation, Plainsound Edition)
- 1999 • Marc Sabat: *Chamber Music* (compilation, Plainsound Edition)
• James Tenney: *Music for violin & piano* - Sabat/Clarke (hat [now] ART 120)
- 2000 • Morton Feldman: *Complete music for violin and piano* - Sabat/Clarke (mode records 82/3)
- 2003 • Nicolas Fernandez/Marc Sabat/Peter Sabat: *Change in your pocket* – (Plainsound Edition)
• Maria de Alvear: *Thinking* - Sabat/Clarke (World Edition)
• Christian Wolff: *Complete music for violin and piano* - Sabat/Clarke (mode records126)
- 2004 • Marc Sabat/Peter Sabat: *Three For Magister Zacharias* – 5-ch audio (Plainsound Edition)
- 2005 • Marc Sabat: *YOU MAY NOT WANT TO BE HERE (after Bruce Nauman)* (compilation, Plainsound Edition)
- 2006 • Lorenzo Pompa/Marc Sabat: *Father's suit and watch* – video-ballet (Plainsound Edition)

- 2008 • Marc Sabat: *Artificial Music for Machines* (compilation, Plainsound Edition)
- 2010 • Lorenzo Pompa/Marc Sabat: *Epistolae Cucumeris* (300 signed copies, Plainsound Edition)
- Lorenzo Pompa/Marc Sabat: *wave piano scenery player* (World Edition 0016)
- Morton Feldman: *Trio* (mode records 216)
- 2011 • Marc Sabat: *Erbesen*—part of the compilation *electronic counterpoint* by Lucia Mense (satelita 004)
- Lorenzo Pompa/Marc Sabat: *Loss & Gain* (double LP, edition of 3, Plainsound Edition)
- 2012 • Lorenzo Pompa/Marc Sabat: *Zap Pole Moron* (Plainsound Edition/Villa Massimo)
- 2013 • Lorenzo Pompa/Marc Sabat: *Hand Me Down* (CDR multiple, Plainsound Edition)
- 2014 • Marc Sabat: *Les Duresses* (LP/Download, Andrew McIntosh, care of editions)
- Marc Sabat: *Modernes Kaufhaus* (Gnarwhallaby, Populist Records)
- 2017 • Marc Sabat: *Harmony* (JACK Quartet, another timbre 109)
- upcoming • Marc Sabat: *Nature* (mode)
- releases on World Edition, sacred realism, care of editions

publications

- 2005 • *The Extended Helmholtz-Ellis JI Pitch Notation: eine Notationsmethode für die natürlichen Intervalle* (in "Mikrotöne und Mehr: Auf György Ligeti's Hamburger Pfaden", herausgegeben von Manfred Stahnke, von Bockel Verlag, Hamburg)
- 2006 • *Towards an Expanded Definition of Consonance: Tuneable Intervals on Horn, Tuba and Trombone* (with Robin Hayward)
- 2007 • *Three Crystal Growth Algorithms in 23-limit Constrained Harmonic Space* (Contemporary Music Review, Volume 27 Part I, 2008, "The Music of James Tenney"; also published in a German-language version in Musiktexte 112, February 2007, Köln)
- 2008 • *An algorithm for real-time harmonic microtuning* (5th Sound and Music Computing Conference, Berlin)
- 2009 • *On the Notation and Performance Practice of Extended Just Intonation* (Smith Publications, Baltimore)
- 2010 • *Some Reflections about Sound, Music and Art* (Positionen—Texte zur aktuellen Musik 84, Mühlenbeck)
- 2011 • *Stay Still / Still Stehn* (Positionen 89, November 2011)
- 2012 • *Färbungen im chromatischen Feld—Intonationen nach Morton Feldman* (Musiktexte 133, May 2012)
- *Shadings in the Chromatic Field: Intonations after Morton Feldman* (Search Journal for New Music and Culture, Issue 9, Fall 2012)
- 2014 • *KunstMusik 16/17* (Maria de Alvear World Edition, Köln) "INTONATION"
- 2015 • *Musik, die wir wirklich brauchen. Ben Johnstons Pantonalität am Beispiel seiner Streichquartette* (MusikTexte 144, February 2015)
- *Pantonalität generalized: Ben Johnston's artistic researches in extended just intonation* (Tempo, Volume 69, Issue 272, April 2015)
- 2016 • *Three Tables for Bob* (Tempo, Volume 70, Issue 278, 10.2016)
- 2017 • *Aufzeichnungen zur Evolution der Harmonie / Sketching the Evolution of Harmony* (Positionen 110)
- 2019 • *Well temperament revisited: two tunings for two keyboards a quartertone apart in extended JI* (Xenharmonikon, 27 June 2019)
- *Farey Sequences Map Playable Nodes on a String* by Thomas Nicholson and Marc Sabat (upcoming in Tempo, Volume 74)
- *Relative Dissonance / Relative Dissonanz* by Marc Sabat (trans. Konstantin Heuer) (MusikTexte 163, November 2019)

interviews / features

- 2008 • *Marc Sabat's Musik für Menschen und Maschinen* by Matthias Entress, 60' (DeutschlandRadio Berlin)
- 2009 • *An Interview with Marc Sabat* by Daniel Veza
- 2010 • *Lautstrom 1: with Marc Sabat* by Anna Bromley and Jeremy Woodruff, 60' (reboot.fm)
- 2012 • *Intonation ist Komposition* by Thomas Groetz, 60' (Bayrischer Rundfunk)
- 2013 • *Plainsound Music Edition* by Friederike Kenneweg, 60' (SWR)
- 2015 • *Marc Sabat* by Friederike Kenneweg, 60' (DeutschlandRadio Berlin) (Redaktion: Carolin Naujocks)
- 2016 • *Marc Sabat: music beyond music* by Nick Storing (Musicworks #125, Summer 2016)
- 2017 • *Across The Great Divide: New Experimental Music from Canada* by Timothy Rutherford-Johnson (The WIRE 397, March 2017)
- *The strangeness of nature* by Paul Griffiths (CD booklet text, mode records, 2017)