

## György Kurtág (b.1926) 6 Moments Musicaux Op 44 (2005)

- I. Invocatio (un fragment). *Con moto, passionato*
- II. Footfalls (...mintha valaki jönne...- as if someone were coming). *Molto sostenuto*
- III. Capriccio. *Ben ritmato*
- IV. In memoriam György Sebök. *Mesto, pesante*
- V. Rappel des oiseaux (étude pour les harmoniques). Léger, tendre, volatil à Tabea Zimmerman
- VI. Les Adieux (in Janáček's Manier [sic]). *Parlando. rubato*

Born into a Hungarian Jewish family in northern Romania, Kurtág moved to Budapest in 1946 when he was twenty. The year after the 1956 uprising he spent in Paris ostensibly to study with Messiaen and Milhaud, but in fact undergoing treatment for severe depression and a creative block from art psychologist Marianne Stein. She was hugely important in releasing and guiding his creativity. Kurtág 'self-purified' himself by eating only rice and performing angular gymnastics. He also copied out Webern scores, read Samuel Beckett and Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, made stick figures out of matches, dust-balls and cigarette butts and felt as a 'cockroach striving to change into a human being, seeking light and purity'. He returned to Budapest, discarded his previous compositions and produced his 'Opus 1' a string quartet dedicated to Stein.

Writing for quartet suits Kurtág's style: transparent, condensed and diverse in its sound world. Although his style is distinctively his own, many of his compositions allude eclectically to others, for example: *Hommage à Nancy Sinatra*, *Homage to Tchaikovsky*, *In Memory of a Just Person*, *Omaggio a Luigi Nono*. Today's 6 pieces, each about 2 minutes long, are his fourth work for string quartet and refer to: (II.) a poem by Endre Ady and Beckett's play *Footfalls* whose central character paces metronomically across the stage; (III.) Kurtág's friend and pianist György Sebök; (V.) viola player Tabea Zimmerman; and (VI.) the composer Janáček. The pieces use material from Kurtág's *Játékok*, or *Games* - an open-ended series of pedagogical piano pieces similar to Bartók's *Mikrokosmos*.

The following poem by Endre Ady accompanies the second piece which mirrors its bereft desolation:

### No One Comes

Kipp-kopp, as if a woman were coming  
On a dark stairway, trembling, running  
My heart stops, I await something wonderful  
In the autumn dusk, confident.

Kipp-kopp, my heart starts up once again  
I hear it once again, to my deep and great pleasure

In a soft tempo, in a secret rhythm  
As if someone were coming, were coming

Kipp-kopp, now a funeral twilight  
A misty, hollow melody sounds  
The autumn evening. Today no one comes to me  
Today no one will come to me, no one.