

THE MUSICAL GENIUS

Maximilian Cem Haberstock, aged twelve, is a multiple prizewinning pianist, took part in Lang Lang's international master class in Warsaw, was the youngest participant in the Orchestral Workshop for Young Composers, and has made international concert appearances including at the Carnegie Hall in New York City as winner of an international piano competition.

My first ideas for musical compositions came to me when I started to play the piano, in other words when I was seven. I compose operas, sonatas, and symphonic works. I'm passionate about late Classical and Romantic music.

Composing is different for everybody, but of course it always starts with an idea. I sit down at the piano, try the idea out, write it down, and develop it further. I started having composition lessons two years ago because there's a lot of things to think about when you compose a piece of music. There's a definite structure for sonatas, which also applies to symphonies and, for example, piano concertos. One interesting aspect is how the composer handles the theme. It can be modulated through key changes or changes in tempo. Or else it can be played by different instruments in turn.

There are also some basic rules that have to be followed. The notes have to be set down in such a way that the musicians can read them easily, for example without rhythmic displacements, but instead using changes of time signature. And they have to be written in the correct clef for each instrument—for example the flutes, with their high register, must always be in the treble clef and the tuba and tims in the bass clef. Otherwise it's difficult for the musicians to read the notes. That means I need to know about all the instruments.

A few weeks ago I discovered what it's like to hear one of my pieces performed by a big orchestra. It sounded far better than I'd imagined.

For a while now, I've also been learning to conduct. In addition to perfect preparation of the piece of music, I also have to find a way of communicating what I want to the musicians. And for that reason psychology is really important in conducting.