

Fabian Joosten was born and raised in Baden-Baden, into a family of musicians — his father a professional orchestral percussionist, his mother a flutist and organist. He came into contact with several instruments early on, including flute, clarinet, and drums, but a turning point came when he decided to teach himself guitar. That shift toward self-directed, autodidactic learning became a defining philosophy that has stayed with him ever since, carrying through into his later work as a composer and orchestrator, where he continues to trust his ear and instincts as much as formal convention.

Although his father's profession meant he grew up familiar with the sound and mechanics of the orchestra, it was only in his early twenties that his passion for writing for orchestra took hold in earnest. He spent several years studying under Robin Hoffmann, a composer, orchestrator, and arranger based in Berlin, who shaped Joosten's understanding of the orchestra not only as a single unified body of sound, but as a gathering of individual musicians, each with distinct artistic needs and intentions — a perspective that continues to inform how he writes and arranges today. His formative listening — metal, rock, hip hop, and jazz — likewise left its mark, and still surfaces in the rhythmic drive that runs through much of his orchestral writing.

Joosten's earliest professional work was in composing for video games, including *Unreal Tournament* and *Banished*, music that remains in circulation today. Working almost entirely in the digital domain during this period sharpened his appetite for writing with and for live musicians, and set him on a path toward the concert hall. His first works for orchestra were gathered on the release *We're Going on an Adventure*, three miniatures from which received their premiere in 2016 with the Baden-Baden Philharmonics under Judith Kubitz — the beginning of a relationship that would prove central to his artistic development.

The Baden-Baden Philharmonics soon became a foundational partner, not only for Joosten's work as a composer but for his emergence as an arranger — a role that has become one of the clearest expressions of his artistic outlook: bringing different musical worlds onto the same stage, and drawing out what an orchestra or ensemble can offer almost any genre placed in front of it. Early milestones included his arrangement for the East West Symphony project with the German ethno-jazz ensemble Masaa, whose music fuses jazz tradition with the sounds of Orient and Occident, and his arrangement of "Die Beste Nacht," a production by Baden-Baden Events and DasDing Radio bringing orchestra together with German rap icon Kontra K, conducted by Pavel Baleff. His arrangements for Masaa endured and were later recorded with the Jena Philharmonics under Bernd Ruf and released as part of the album *East West Symphony: Hiwar* (2021), which went on to receive nominations for both the Opus Klassik and the Preis der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik.

In the years that followed, Joosten's arranging work extended further across genre lines through a long-standing collaboration with Bernd Ruf, including contributions to the Händelfestspiele's "Bridges to Classics" series with the Staatskapelle Halle — arranging works by The Hooters, Queen, Peter Gabriel, and Cat Stevens — as well as recurring work for the Filmmusiktage Sachsen-Anhalt between 2017 and 2023.

As a composer, 2018 brought the completion of "Kheer Tal," a three-part work for Morin Khuur, throat singing, and orchestra, premiered with soloist Enkhjargal Dandarvaanchig (known as Epi), the Baden-Baden Philharmonics, and conductor Mark Mast. Further

premieres and collaborations with the orchestra followed, including "The White Messengers" and "Cherry Blossom Dance." In 2019, Joosten was commissioned by the Sorbian National-Ensemble to compose the music for "Sagennacht – Die Rache," part of the annual Spreewald Legend Nights held at Burg Schlossberg — a large-scale outdoor production combining dance, singing, and theatre around the legend of the Wendish King.

BT, 25 June 2018, No. 143 — Conny Hecker-Stock on "Kheer Tal"

*The myths of his homeland came vividly to life in the "horse race" movement, capturing everything from the prancing approach before the start to the nervous snorting and flying hooves, rendered in an archaic and powerful way.*

Joosten's output grew markedly during the pandemic years, a period in which live performance came to a near standstill but his compositional output did not. He wrote "Fantasy for Violin and Orchestra" specifically for Baden-Baden Philharmonics concertmaster Yasushi Ideue, and "Der Hirschsprung," a symphonic poem retelling the Black Forest legend of the Stag Jump — both works premiered by the Baden-Baden Philharmonics in 2022, under Pavel Baleff and Mark Mast respectively. The same year saw premieres of two works for piano quartet, alongside "Nachtlied," a commission for choir from Collegium Musicum set to a poem by Friedrich Hebbel.

Pforzheimer Zeitung, 24 May 2022 — Gabriele Meyer on "Der Hirschsprung"

*A three-movement journey marked by tonal finesse and quickly shifting tempos, moving from traditional hunting motifs with strong orchestral brass writing into passages bordering on atonality. The composer received well-deserved applause for this highly virtuosic piece.*

In 2023, Joosten's most overtly political work to date, "Emerged from Nothingness," premiered under Heiko-Mathias Förster in a concert marking French-German friendship; the piece — which reflects on the aftermath of the Second World War — returned to France the following year for three further performances marking the 80th anniversary of D-Day. That same year also brought the premiere of his symphonic work "The Ignition" with the Youth Symphony Orchestra of Saxony under Judith Kubitz, and "Gear Shift," written for horn octet and performed by the Brazilian/German horn ensemble Trompa Brasilis.

infolocale Publicité, 18 June 2024 — E. Sytem on "Emerged From Nothingness"

*The piece evokes the tearing open of the sky on the morning of D-Day, but also forgiveness and reconciliation extended by the former enemy. The performance was met with a standing ovation, marking, in the reviewer's words, "a great success."*

Across both his composing and arranging work, Joosten is drawn to what lies between: between the concert hall and the world of film, between orchestral tradition and the genres he grew up on, between an artist's own musical language and the orchestra's capacity to meet it halfway. Rhythm remains a driving force throughout his music, which tends toward the hopeful and affirming — an ongoing attempt, as he describes it, to offer a small act of benevolence in difficult times.