

# Mathias Johannes Schmidhammer -

Selfportrait of the Winner of „Ö1 Talentebörse“!

by Renate Publig



© Schmidhammer

## Ö1 Talentebörse Composition Award 2018

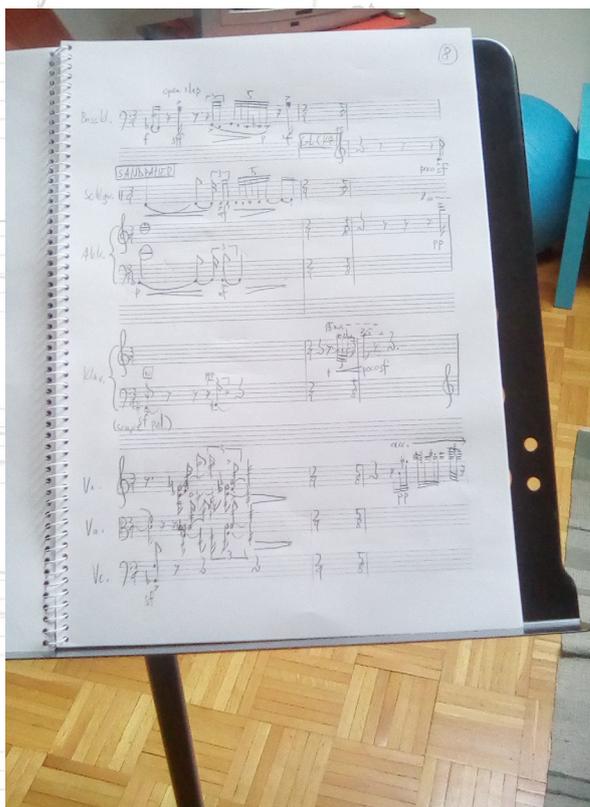
The winner of the Ö1 Talentebörse Composition Award 2018 is Mathias Johannes Schmidhammer, who studied at the University of Music and Performing Arts with Michael Jarrell, Johannes Maria Staud,



Periklis Liakakis and Axel Seidelmann. This young talents' support is endowed with 10,000 Euros and is supported by the Oesterreichische Nationalbank. As another cooperation partner Doblinger publishes the winner's piece. The Ö1 award, unique in this form, was offered this year for the sixth time and targets composition students at the five Austrian music universities in Vienna, Linz, Salzburg and Graz.

## Graduation with distinction

Mathias Johannes Schmidhammer graduated from his studies with distinction. He also pursues a piano pedagogy degree at the same university, with Harald Ossberger. His Three Pieces for Piano Trio were selected as compulsory pieces for the 6th International Joseph Haydn Chamber Music Competition in Vienna, 2015, and laid the founding stone for our publishing house's collaboration with the young composer. We invited Schmidhammer to produce a self-portrait:



## Making listeners curious

*'In my music I aim to write a narrative with sounds. I do not mean programmatic music here, but that it is important to me to let the musical actions develop in such a way that the listeners become curious as to what happens to the individual elements and how, to put it casually, the piece turns out.*

## Dramaturgic arc

*That is, a dramaturgic arc throughout a piece is very important to me—be it a one-minute miniature or a work of twenty minutes.*

*But that this arc can appear and that the listeners remain interested in the piece I think that something fascinating in terms of sound or harmony is necessary, something that ideally makes a piece unmistakable.*

For your soundfiles:

**Soundsample**  
<https://bit.ly/2Rahc5a>

**Sheet Music**  
<https://bit.ly/2Kv02ww>

**Ö1 Talentebörse**  
<https://oe1.orf.at/artikel/648935>

*That does not mean that I wish to invent the wheel anew in every piece, but that I try to be sensitive towards circumstances such as scoring, planned duration, maybe even the occasion of the composition from the outset, always reacting anew to that which has already been put to paper. That is, apart from creating an arc of suspense I also want to build a building of sound in which one likes to spend time, and in which one discovers something new and exciting even after repeated listening.*

*It is always difficult to stylistically place one's own music, but still I manage to discern some typical traits of my pieces. Thus, pitch as carrier for harmony plays a great role; that is, I want that my music seems logical in harmony. But I also like to explore extended sound techniques and playing techniques of instruments that do not produce distinct pitches. Apart from minimalist (very little material, eventually frequent repetition) and maximalist (very much simultaneous material, extrovert) inflections it is also important for me to include passages that carry onwards, that is, that in a way arbitrate between the two extremes. I think that such passages are*

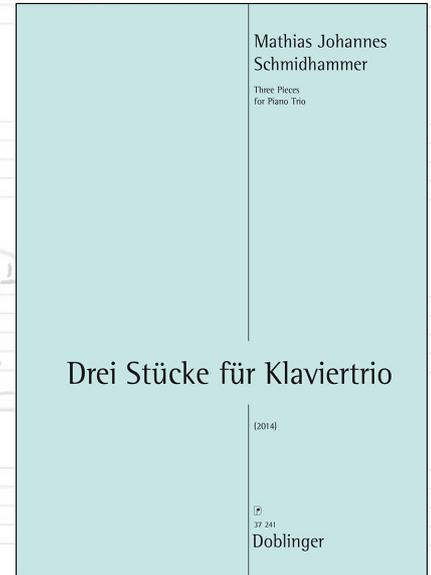
Schmidhammer's composer's stand - „Reportedly it is more healthy to compose standing“.)

# Mathias Johannes Schmidhammer



frequently necessary in order to provide suspense and variety, and to give full effect to the more extreme passages. And, finally, the stylistic device of allusion is very important to me, especially in the field of melody. This may sound a bit abstract, but I think it is one of the great things in music that one can be vague and precise at the same time. A short melodic fragment, used correctly, can insinuate much that is, on the one hand, pretty clear and, on the other hand, does not entirely give its secrets away. This is a relatively new thought for me and perhaps this is why my formulating it may be a bit awkward.

I am finally finished with a piece the feeling is most often quite ambivalent. On the one hand I am in a sense relieved and happy—especially if there was a relatively narrow deadline—, but on the other hand it is unfortunate that I have to leave a world with its own rules so soon after finally having understood them.



Music is a performative art in which the time aspect always plays a great role. That is, the music listeners give the musicians, or, in my case, the composer, not only their attention, but also their time. And so, I always think that I want to tell them something exciting, ideally spellbinding, but never boring. Of course, I am always delighted about any positive feedback, but I am especially delighted when persons who perhaps had no prior special affinity to contemporary music succeed in picking up something relevant for themselves from my pieces.

*„The „Three Pieces for Piano Trio“ was our first co-operation with Schmidhammer ...*

This in no way means that I want to ingratiate myself with some mainstream or that I want to make any sell-out artistic compromise, but I do wish that my pieces, when one engages with them, also become effective on a primary emotional plane and function, ideally, also without any lengthy explanations.“ (Mathias Johannes Schmidhammer)

... which continues perfectly with the new piece for ensemble!  
(Manuscript - draft page of the score)

## Time for growth

Before I can begin a new piece a fundamental idea often needs quite some time for growth. But when this image is finally clear I try to approach the piece as quickly and practically as possible to draw nearer and nearer to this image. In most cases there are certain points, states or sections of which I know from a relatively long time beforehand that I want to reach them. And then it is often very exciting to explore the path towards these goals, or if this path even exists at all or if I have to modify or discard the original idea. When



The beaming winner!