

Žibuoklė Martinaitytė
ALETHEIA (2022)

for choir a cappella

*Commissioned by the Lithuanian National Radio for the Latvian Radio Choir and
"Baltic Music Days 2022"*

Composer's note

Aletheia is variously translated from Greek as "unconcealedness", "revealing" or "unclosedness". It is uncovering of the Truth - the one we are afraid to face, the truth that can only be expressed directly through the pre-verbal communication. How do you find words for the horrors of the war, for all unimaginable global atrocities? How do you even allow yourself to feel it out? Solely through art, through music that offer a safe space and a formalized framework for processing these accumulated complex emotions and sharing them with others in a moment. This piece has no verbal text and it is based on various combinations of vowels and consonants, thus connecting us on a deeper level through the immediate emotional experience.

The war in Ukraine in spring of 2022 had an impact on all of us and shattered my deeply rooted Lithuanian identity. When the freedom is threatened and innocent people are dying, it is hard to make sense out of the reality. Yet there is poetry even in the worst nightmares. I was imagining that the only instrument people have even in situations of destruction, in the midst of the war, is their VOICE. It brought back memories of my youth when "Singing revolution" was taking place in the Baltic countries. Human voice was the only weapon that people used to express their determination for freedom and independence. Voice is our first and the very last instrument we have in our lifetime. Thinking in these terms brings almost a sacred dimension to the voice as an expression of the life itself - from the very first baby's scream until the last breath and whisper.

The title for this piece originated from the etymology of the word "Aletheia" that I encountered in Lewis Hyde's book "A Primer for Forgetting". The description here reveals: "Forgetfulness in Greek, in *lethe*, in turn related to *letho* (I escape notice, I am hidden) ultimately from Proto-European *leh* (hide). The private or negative form of this word a-lethe or aletheia is the Greek word usually translated as "truth", the truth then being a thing uncovered or taken out of hiding. In terms of mental life, all that is available to the mind is aletheia; what is not available is for some reason covered, concealed, hidden."

Duration 13-14 min.

Premiere: November 19th, 2022 at the festival "Baltic Music Days" in Kaunas, Lithuania. Performed by the Latvian Radio Choir, conductor Kaspars Putniņš.