

Helmut Oehring



music
theatre

BOOSEY & HAWKES
BOTÉ BOCK

Abbreviations

Voices

S	soprano
colS	coloratura soprano
dramS	dramatic soprano
hS	high soprano
lyrS	lyric soprano
M	mezzo soprano
A	contralto
dramA	dramatic contralto
hA	high contralto
CT	countertenor
T	tenor
hT	high tenor
heldT	heldentenor
Bar	baritone
charBar	character baritone
dramBar	dramatic baritone
hBar	high baritone
lyrBar	lyric baritone
BBar	bass baritone
B	bass

Languages of Vocal Texts

D	Dutch
E	English
F	French
G	German
I	Italian
L	Latin
P	Polish
Pt	Portuguese
S	Spanish

Woodwind

picc	piccolo
fl	flute
afI	alto flute
bfl	bass flute
rec	recorder
ob	oboe
corA	cor Anglais
cl	clarinet (in A or B ₁)
E ₁ cl	clarinet in E ₁
bcl	bass clarinet
dbcl	double bass clarinet
ssax	soprano saxophone
asax	alto saxophone
tsax	tenor saxophone
barsax	baritone saxophone
bn	bassoon
dbn	double bassoon

Brass

hn	horn
crt	cornet
tpt	trumpet
piccpt	piccolo trumpet
trbn	trombone
cbass trbn	contrabass trombone
euph	euphonium
db tuba	double bass tuba

Percussion

bl	block
tpl.bl	temple block
cast	castanets
Chin	Chinese
crot	crotales
cyms	(pair of clashed) cymbals
ant.cyms	antique cymbals
susp.cym	suspended cymbals
dr	drums
SD	side drum
TD	tenor drum
BD	bass drum
glsp	glockenspiel
flex	flexatone
hi	high
lo	low
Jap	Japanese
perc	percussion
sm	small
med	medium
lg	large
t.bells	tubular bells
tamb	tambourine
tam-t	tam-tam
tgl	triangle
timp	timpani
t.mil	tambour militaire
Turk	Turkish
v	very
vib	vibraphone
wdbl	wood block
xyl	xylophone

Strings

vl	violin
vla	viola
vlc	cello
db	double bass

Others

cel	celesta
elec.	electric (eg. guitar)
gtr	guitar
hpd	harpisichord
kbd	keyboard
min	minimum
org	organ
pft	piano
synth	synthesiser

All other instrumental names are given in full, or are self-explanatory combinations of the above.

Oehring Helmut (b.16 July 1961 Berlin)

8CHT (aus: Der Riss) (1998)

Music theatre work

Text by Helmut Oehring (G)
Graphics by Hagen Klennert

World Premiere

28 November 1998 Prater, Berlin
Choreographer: Tatjana Orlob

Scoring

dancer (female), 7 deaf female soloists, electric guitar and live electronics

8CHT (aus: Der Riss), *7IEBEN (aus: Der Spalt)* and *6ECHS (aus: CRUISER/ Das Opfer)*, form part of a cycle counted backwards from 8, with varying instruments, but always with music and text written by Oehring himself, combined with live electronics, deaf actors, dancer(s), instrumental soloists, singers and stage actors.

45'

7IEBEN (aus: Der Spalt) (1998)

Music theatre work

Text by Helmut Oehring (G)
Graphics by Hagen Klennert

World Premiere

1 December 1998 Bonn
Director: Helmut Oehring
Company: Bonn Opera/German State Arts and Exhibitions Centre

Scoring

speaker, dancer(female), 3 deaf female soloists, male soprano, trombone, electric guitar and live electronics

Synopsis

At first it was only a rift.
At first nobody saw it.
It is supposed that rifts are caused where one does not go deeply enough. Where a sort of void is created like a vacuum bubble. There is neither a scientifically reasonable nor a theological explanation for that.
At first, The Rift sucks everything up through an only small opening, and another place is created.
It is the non-place, absolute silence, without hearing, without language.
Muddy. Principally, it is the Dark Grey Green.
There is everything else. The hole.
Fear. Silence. Horror. The race. The lake.

Helmut Oehring

Helmut Oehring: *7ieben*. Bonn Opera (1998)



Photo: Thilo Beu

6ECHS (aus: Cruiser/ Das Opfer) (2000) 25'

Music theatre work

Text by Helmut Oehring (G)
Graphics by Hagen Klennert

World Premiere

29 April 2000 Bremen
Choreographer: Leonard Cruz
Company: Asko Ensemble

Scoring

dancer, 3 deaf female soloists, 3 percussionists and live electronics

BlauWaldDorf⁽²⁰⁰¹⁾ weit-aus-ein-ander liegende Tage

70'

[BlueWoodVillage distantly apart days]

eine musiktheatralische OrtSuche
a music-theatre search of a place

Based on texts by Hans Christian Andersen and Helmut Oehring as well as from Friedrich Schiller's 'Die Jungfrau von Orleans', Claudio Monteverdi and Ottavio Rinuccini's 'Lamento d'Arianna', Thomas More's 'Utopia', Johann Sebastian Bach's BWV 21 and Psalm 69 (G)

World Premiere

27 April 2002 Aachen
Director: Claus Guth
Conductor: Jeremy Hulin
Company: Theater Aachen

Scoring

3 deaf female soloists, Bar, B; chorus
solo elec. gtr—1.1.2.bcl.0—3.3.3(III=dbtrbn)—perc(3)—
prepared pft(=cel,kbd sampler)—strings(8.4.6.4.3)—live electronics

Synopsis

In *BlueWoodVillage*, time and location are out of joint. Though entitled the 'search of a place', the work denies the existence of the place it pretends to search. Likewise, the image of a blue, oceanic, magic ground of the soul, from which a sea-nymph lures us with hazy, floating dreams of an allegorical childhood, is but a romantic seduction. The sounds, gestures, images do not come together in a synthesis of the arts. Oehring 'reads' them as attempts to find a common language, circles around them, scans them for wishes, hopes, possibilities of unbroken, immediate communication.

In *BlueWoodVillage*, just as in the childhood the work conjures up, a world is built up from the movement of light, sound, smell and language sounds. This synaesthetic mosaic adds up to the mere Fata Morgana of a place: it remains fragmentary, impenetrable, boundless. The moment of an immediate encounter with the Other is only possible at a non-place which is both motionless and filled with dance. During the moment of 'Blickstille', there are no words, only "LANGUAGE Powder FIGURES". "NON-PLACE – YOU-PLACE" is a state between the world of humans and the world of the sea, without words, without silence, only "SILENCE VILLAGE PEOPLE". The anxiety and sorrow of the 'I' transform into a weightlessness in which language seems possible without failure and separation.

Helmut Oehring: *BlauWaldDorf*. Claus Guth's world premiere production for Theater Aachen (2002)

DAS D'AMATO SYSTEM⁽¹⁹⁹⁶⁾

60'

Dance opera in 15 scenes

Text by Helmut Oehring (G)

World Premiere

9 May 1996 Carl Orff Saal, Munich
Director: Maxim Dessau
Conductor: Roland Kluttig
Company: Kammerensemble Neue Musik Berlin

Scoring

deaf female soloist (sign- and spoken language), 2 voices, 1 speaker, 2 dancers
bfl.ob.bcl—tpt.hn.trbn—perc(2)—harp—pft(=sampler keyboard)—
elec.gtr(=elec.bass)—vln.vlc

Synopsis

Music therapy gives ample evidence that music follows the same hidden structures that govern our body movements and perceptions. Are boxers therefore musicians? In any case they are masochists, Helmut Oehring says – after all they are addicted to being punched. But perhaps they seek something completely different in the ring – possibly something similar to that which the composer seeks on stage? They read every body movement of the opposite number and develop methods such as the system named after Mike Tyson's coach Cus D'Amato which enables one to move forwards and backwards at the same time. Their body language, which is spoken by means of reflex and intuition, avoids the explicit language of mere words.

Boxing fan Oehring goes even further, mixing spoken language with the language of writing, gesture, dance, music and film. A montage of sounds in classical and popular style is created, the singing being accompanied by the simultaneous narration of a text in sign language, "cold screens and the empty movements of huge metal structures... in the spirit of the unholy trinity of Dada, Bauhaus and disco" (Wolfgang Schreiber) intertwine. All of this is done for the sake of the thrill of the unique encounter, a sort of communication through pure, eloquent movement not alienated by 'meaning'. Is Oehring truly a masochist – or rather a kind of boxer?

Recommended Recording

Christina Schönfeld/Salome Kammer/Matthias Hille/Anna Clementi/
Kammerensemble Neue Musik Berlin/Roland Kluttig
BMG/RCA 74321 73544-2 (excerpt)

On Sale

M-2025-2118-2 Full score (G)



Dokumentaroper (1994-95)

56'

[Documentary Opera]

BITTE SAGEN SIE MIR IHREN NAMEN NOCH EINMAL, ICH HABE IHN BEI DER VORSTELLUNG NICHT DEUTLICH VERSTANDEN (aus: Irrenoffensive)

[Please tell me your name again, I did not understand it clearly during the presentation (from: Fools' Offensive)]

Text by Helmut Oehring (G)

World Premiere

21 April 1995 Witten

Director: Maxim Dessau

Conductor: Roland Kluttig

Company: Kammerensemble Neue Musik Berlin

Scoring

mezzo soprano, voice, 3 deaf soloists

ob.sax—tp.t.trbn.tuba—perc—vln.vlc.elec.gtr—live electronics

Synopsis

There are neither roles nor dialogue, neither an imaginary scene nor any scenes at all. (And thus there are no clues for staging it, at least not at first sight.) Everything is the scene, but the scene is not everything. For the 'music' or, rather, everything that sounds, is completely staged! Yet in a way that is not obvious. Sounds move from left to right, from the back to the front, through the middle, etc., although none of those taking part leave their 'scene'. This means that the greater part of the action – the opera? – takes place independently of what is going on stage...

In this deceptive context, sensory perception capitulates or, rather, that which it is considered to be. Finding the position of nearness and distance, of inside and outside, of subject and object, no longer functions; the (hearing) 'I' is suddenly without boundaries... Thus the documentary opera is in fact a document on the failure of language, on the limits of communication. (As though one had come to some sort of an end. As though language only speaks of itself and incessantly sends out its clichés into the world, as though it were a machine.) *Iris ter Schiphorst*

Recommended Recording

Salome Kammer/Ulrike Zech/Kammerensemble Neue Musik Berlin/
Roland Kluttig

Wergo WER6534

On Sale

M-2025-2097-0 Full score (G)

DOKUMENTATION I (1993/96)

60'

(aus: Irrenoffensive)

(from: Fools' Offensive)

Chamber Opera

Text by Helmut Oehring (G)

World Premiere

4 September 1996 Teatro Lirico Sperimentale, Spoleto

Director: Daniele Abbado

Conductor: Roland Kluttig

Company: ensemble di musica contemporanea

Scoring

voice, male soprano, 3 deaf soloists

ob.sax(=bcl)—tp.t.trbn.tuba—perc(2)—harp—prepared pft(=sampling keyboard)—elec.gtr(=elec.bass guitar) with volume pedal—vln.vlc—live electronics

Synopsis

Documentation I is the attempt to fill silence with a grammar of sounds and movement. Music exists only as a mere language of signs. Like other sign languages, it can contract past, present and future into a single movement. The sounds and noises in Oehring's *Documentation I* approach the limit of what is audible, only the room is vibrating, not structured by time and measure.

This eloquent silence is a potential form of language, but it is also the room of Oehring's own early childhood, when he – the son of deaf parents – only learned to speak at the age of five. The period before is full of inner conflicts, misunderstandings, failed communication; it was only much later that Oehring felt a sort of happiness over the experience of a world of signs and gestures.

He draws the audience into his own realm that is torn between hearing and deafness: There are those who listen but do not understand what they are seeing, and others who can see but not hear. Thus both come closer to each other, as at the first Italian performance of *Documentation I* when the hearing audience joined the silent applause of the deaf.

Helmut Oehring: *Dokumentaroper*. Podewil, Berlin (1995)



Photo: Harald Falkenhagen

GUNTEN ⁽²⁰⁰⁸⁾

70'

Seit ich hier bin, habe ich es bereits fertig gebracht,
mir zum Rätsel zu werden.

Instrumental DiaryTheatre based on Robert Walser's novel
'Jakob von Gunten', for octet, live electronics and three actors

Conception and text adaptation: Stefanie Wördemann (G)

World premiere

16 October 2008 GARE DU NORD Bahnhof für Neue Musik, Basle

Director: Marcus Bothe

Conductor: Jürg Henneberger

Company: Silvester von Hösslin / ChrisTine Urspruch /
Georg Martin Bode / Ensemble Phoenix

Scoring

3actors

bfl.bcl(=dbcl)—tpt(=Flugel hn)—perc(1):marimba/vib/glass harp/
rattle/rainmaker/BD/SD/3cym/clash.cym/Chin.cym/ant.cym/gong/
Chin.opera gong/Jap.howl gong/cowbell/tam-t/anvil/2tom-t/
4bongos/steel bl/metal plate/paper bag/friction dr—
prep pft(=sampler)—vla(=vln).vlc.db
live electronics

Roles

Jakob von Gunten
actor / speaker with yodelling talent

Fräulein Lisa
actress / speaker with dance talent

Herr Benjamenta
actor / speaker

Jakob's brother Johann
piano (also sampler keyboard) / speaker

Jakob's college brothers:

Kraus
double bass / speaker

Heinrich
bass flute / speaker

Schacht
viola/violin / speaker

Schilinski
trumpet (also Flugel horn) / speaker

Hans
percussion / speaker

Peter
bass clarinet (also double bass clarinet) / speaker (female)

Fuchs
cello / speaker

Helmut Oehring: GUNTEN.

Marcus Bothe's world premiere production for GARE DU NORD, Basle
(2008) with members of the Ensemble Phoenix (college inmates)



Photo: Ute Schendiel

Synopsis

The work is exclusively based on text excerpts from the novel. The eleven short scenes, interrupted by three 'Dream Audio Plays', follow this basic framework: Jakob von Gunten, the son of 'good family', is admitted to the Benjamenta Institute, an educational home for servants where the pupils learn 'little, but thoroughly'. Jakob describes his comrades, their views and plans for the future. Within the strange atmosphere of the house, murky and barely articulated desires and moods unfold. While Jakob is drawn towards his fellow pupil, Kraus, he dreams of Miss Lisa, the director's sister, with whom he has secret conversations. Benjamenta himself is impressed with Jakob. Finally, things take a turn for the worse in the home: Lisa dies and Benjamenta dismisses all of the pupils except for Jakob, who he asks to join him on his journey into the world. After pondering the idea for a while, he agrees.

Im Dickicht der ZEICHEN (aus: du wo?) ⁽²⁰⁰⁴⁾

30'

[In the Thicket of SIGNS (from: you where?)]

7ieben Szenen in Musik, in 6echs Bildern und 2wei Schlüssen
[Seven scenes in music, in six images and two ends]
for deaf mute soloist, mezzo-soprano, pantomime, electric guitar,
ensemble, light, installation/projection and live electronics

Text by Oehring and passages, some freely remembered,
by Büchner, Fontane and Jabès (G)

World Premiere

29 October 2004 Städtische Bühnen, Kleines Haus, Münster

Conductor: René Gulikers

Christina Schönfeld / Anne-Carolyn Schlüter / Matthias Hille /
Jörg Wilkendorf / Ensemble WireWorks

Scoring

deaf mute soloist(female),M,mime

elec.gtr solo; bfl—perc:marimba/vib/SD/cym/steel bl/glass harp—
harp—pft

live electronics

Synopsis

Im Dickicht der ZEICHEN attempts to create a model of communication. Groups of musicians, scores, samples and loops faded into the live performance as well as human action are all combined on stage and in the performance space. Scenic, theatrical elements are generated as a response to sign language, through onomatopœic verse, pantomime and lighting effects, as well as a technical texture made up of control data, produced in real time. All these elements, none of which is given priority over the others, form a unity that has a playful, dream-like quality which centres around the subject of space.

'Space as a living BEING, opening up and contracting, as a body, breathing, BeingAllLungs, a sacred PLACE, shining and murdering.

Being THE PLACE—Everything to everybody.

And Nothing.'

Recommended Recording

Ensemble WireWorks & Soloists / René Gulikers
Festival 'KlangZeit – HörenSagen', Münster 2004

Kobayashi singt (unter fremden Sternen) (2004) 40'

[Kobayashi sings (under foreign stars)]
ein anschaulicher Dokumentarbericht mit Musik (Featuredram)
[an illustrative documentary report with music (featuredrama)]
(Kommander Kobayashi – eine Opersaga, Teil 2)
[[Kommander Kobayashi – an opera-saga, part 2]]
for soloist, deaf mute soloist, three female voices, electric guitar,
ensemble and live electronics

Idea by Sebastian Bark / Sven Holm
Text by Oehring / Daniel Kötter / Torsten Ottersberg (G)
Conception by Sebastian Bark

World Premiere

14 January 2005 Opera stabile, Hamburg
Director: Sven Holm
Conductor: Vicente Larrañaga
Company: NOVOFLOT / Orchester der Hamburgischen Staatsoper

Scoring

S,M,A,T/Bar,deaf mute soloist
elec.gtr solo; 0.1.0.bcl.0—2.2.2.0—perc(2):SD/BD/vib/marimba/cym/
chimes/tam-t/steel bl/t.bells/cowbells/plastic bag/
tom cardboard&paper—pft(=cel)—vla.2vlc.db
live electronics

Synopsis

The opera-saga *Kommander Kobayashi* is a new 'format' on the music-theatre stage that unfolds in several separate episodes, each of which has its own aesthetic character. For full-length performances, three of these short operas, each of which lasts about 30 minutes, are grouped together to form a series. Thus the concept of the saga sets up a framework within which different approaches to musical theatre can be expressed and at the same time relate to one another.

The pivotal figure is Commander Kobayashi, who – together with a handful of spacemen / astronauts – navigates the spaceship 'La Fenice' through time and space, in search of a mission or possibly trying to escape. It is an odyssey through the vast universe, that continuously surges against the mind, that wants to be understood, withstood or at least survived.

In Oehring's *Kobayashi singt (unter fremden Sternen)*, the commander appears in various forms: as a baritone, an actor using sign language, and in video projections and audio tracks. The mixture of poetic self-reflection and pseudo-documentary technical jargon makes it apparent that Kobayashi comes to meet himself as a result of 'ingenious' programming and navigation errors and the paradox of time travel. Thus the journey through the universe leads to crucial issues of identity, reality and the discovery of the kind of present which, it seems, cannot be found, or even imagined in the various streams of time, moving backwards and forwards.

'I always needed
Those spaces between
One dream and the next'

WOZZECK kehrt zurück (2003) 70'

[WOZZECK comes back]
tonschriftliche MOMENTAUFNAHME in drei Abzügen (12 Kontakten)
sound-scriptural SNAPSHOT in three proofs (12 contacts)
Texts by Georg Büchner, Martin Luther, Helmut Oehring
and from the Revelation of John (G)

World Premiere

26 June 2004 Aachen
Director: Michael Simon
Conductor: Jeremy Hulin
Company: Theater Aachen

Scoring

3 female soloists (sopranos), 3 deaf mute soloists; chamber chorus;
dancer (performer); solo elec.gtr—1.1.1.bcl.0—2.1.1.btrbn.0—
perc(3)—pft(=keyboard)—strings(1.2.1.1.1)—live electronics

Synopsis

Oehring's *Wozzeck* is the drama of the insecurity and the homelessness of the human being in a world without God or Humanity. For a great part, the work is based on Georg Büchner's 1836 theatre play *Woyzeck*, combined with sayings of Martin Luther, excerpts from the Revelation of John and passages of text by the composer himself. But also Alban Berg's *Wozzeck* (1921) works as a constitutional element, becoming the hub of the piece's subject and music. In the centre the deadly conflict between the Drum Major, Wozzeck and Marie, enriched, of course, with new perspectives on the old story – through the fascinating and enigmatic world of the deaf, Oehring's own biographical and aesthetic background.

Helmut Oehring: *Kobayashi singt (unter fremden Sternen)*.
Sven Holm's world premiere production for Hamburg/Berlin (2005)
with Soichi Kobayashi (baritone soloist) and Giuseppe Giurrana
(deaf mute soloist)



Photo: NOVOFLOT

UNSIHTBAR LAND (2004–05)

110'

[INVISIBLE LAND]

Opera in seven days based on William Shakespeare: 'The Tempest', with added music by Henry Purcell

for three deaf mute soloists, speaker, soprano (female), soprano (male), mezzo-soprano, tenor, bass baritone, bass clarinet, trumpet, electric guitar, baroque ensemble, mixed chorus, orchestra and live electronics

Text by Oehring / Torsten Ottersberg and historical sources (G-E)

World Premiere

7 May 2006 Theatre, Basle

Director: Claus Guth

Conductor: Giorgio Paronuzzi / Jürg Henneberger

Company: Theater Basel / Schola Cantorum Basiliensis / Ensemble Phoenix

Scoring

3deaf mute soloists; S,M,CT,T,BBar; speaker;

chorus(12S.8A.10T.10B)

solo elec.gtr; solo tpt; solo bcl

2(l,tl=picc).0.1.bcl.tsax.0.dbn—3.3.3.1—perc(3);SD/BD/TD/2tom-t/steel block/tam-t/gong/vib/marimba/cyms(hi,med,lo)/crash.cym/Chin.opera gong/Chin.splash cym/timbales/tamb/cast/hi-hat/t.bells/plate bells/cowbells/hi bells/jingles/flex/glass&metal chimes/rainmaker/whistle/bird pipe/shell play/wind machine/plastic bag/torn cardboard&paper—tuned pft(=cel)—strings(4.2.0.6.6)

Baroque ensemble: 2ob.1bn—theorbo—vla da gamba—hpd(=org)—strings(2.2.1.1.1)

live electronics; 2video beamers; 3slide projectors; sliding overtittle projection

Synopsis

In *UNSIHTBAR LAND*, two stories are interwoven: Shakespeare's 'The Tempest' and a failed expedition into an icy landscape. Foreign worlds meet and merge into each other. In Shakespeare's 'The Tempest', Prospero lives with his daughter Miranda on a lonely island after having been expelled from his court. He has made the two inhabitants of the island, the spirit Ariel and the 'savage' Caliban, into his subjects. Using magical powers and Ariel's assistance, Prospero raises a storm in order to shipwreck his court opponents on the island. While the courtiers are wandering about the island, Prospero arranges a meeting between Miranda and young Ferdinand – the two fall in love. Eventually Prospero discloses his real identity to his enemies and forgives them. Renouncing magic, he releases Ariel.

On 15 December 1914, the polar explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton sets sail with his expedition vessel 'Endurance.' On the vessel there are 27 official expedition members and one stowaway. The aim of the journey is to be the first to cross the antarctic continent from coast to coast via the pole. Shackleton and his team do not reach their destination. The 'Endurance' is locked in drifting pack-ice, and, a few months later, crushed by several tons of ice. The team escapes to drifting ice floes. A march for survival begins, ending on an uninhabited island. It was not until 30 August 1916 that the final members of the crew were rescued. *Bettina Auer*

Helmut Oehring: *UNSIHTBAR LAND*.

Claus Guth's world premiere production for Theater Basel (2006) with Arno Raunig (soprano)



Oehring Helmut (b.16 July 1961 Berlin) ter Schiphorst Iris (b.22 May 1956 Hamburg)

The following works are co-composed by Oehring and ter Schiphorst

Bernarda Albas Haus (1999) [The House of Bernarda Alba]

A dance theatre piece

Based on the play by Federico García Lorca

World Premiere

11 November 1999 Basel
Choreographer: Joachim Schlömer
Company: Basel Theatre

Scoring

deaf soloist (female), male soprano; 7 dancers
elec.gtr—db—live electronics

90'

Synopsis

'A piece about silence.' That is the theme Joachim Schlömer and Helmut Oehring have chosen for *The House of Bernarda Alba*. Federico García Lorca's story of old Bernarda and her daughters is re-told through dance. The Spanish village tragedy is not in the foreground, however, but the effects and principles of prohibitions and taboos. What is the life of seven women in a house like in which the subject of sexuality is a taboo? Helmut Oehring's music provides a musical space for this 'tragedy' by making visible the 'oppressive atmosphere of silence' by an impressive compositional condensation of electronically alienated sounds.

Recommended Recording

Helmut Oehring / Iris ter Schiphorst: *Bernarda Albas Haus*
Arno Raunig / Christina Schönfeld / Jörg Wilkendorf / Peter Kowald / Markus Reschtnewki (Basel 1999, excerpt)
(Deutscher Musikrat – Musik in Deutschland 1950–2000 / Tanztheater: Motive der Weltliteratur)
BMG 74321 73577 2

Helmut Oehring/Iris ter Schiphorst: *Bernarda Albas Haus*. Joachim Schlömer's world premiere production for Basel Theatre (1999)



EFFI BRIEST⁽²⁰⁰⁰⁾

Music theatre psychogram in four acts

90'

Libretto by Helmut Oehring and Iris ter Schiphorst, after the novel by Theodor Fontane (G)

World Premiere

9 March 2001 Kunststhal, Bonn

Director: Ulrike Ottinger

Conductor: Wolfgang Ott

Company: Ensemble musikFabrik NRW

Scoring

deaf soloist (female), voice, male soprano, female speaker

solo tpt—3cl—2tpt—perc(2)—acc—pft(=sampler kbd)—elec.gtr—

elec.bass gtr—2vlc.3db—live electronics

Synopsis

When a composer whose works centre around communication and language collaborates with an artist who is known for her multimedia operas to bring Fontane's *Effi Briest* to stage, one almost expects a tension between interpretation and deconstruction. It is all but surprising that the work follows the narrative structure of the novel without major gaps. However, both composers have always shown great distrust in the claim of language to produce communication between human beings. As a result they present both the possibilities

Helmut Oehring/Iris ter Schiphorst: *Effi Briest*.

Ulrike Ottinger's world premiere production for Bonn Opera (2001)



Photo: Thilo Beu

and the prevention of communication; sound, language, gesture, movement and image intermingle, often failing to create a continuous flow of communication.

The complex texture of changing forms of expression makes the deep psychology of the conflict between wish and convention visible, while the identity of voice, character and actor is often ambiguous.

The music expresses the intricate relation of language to traditional forms, as the fateful and tragic dimension of the plot is presented on a canvas ranging from chanson to baroque aria.

Der Ort ist nicht der Ort⁽²⁰⁰⁰⁾

70'

[The place is not the place]

A music-theatre 'action'

Libretto by Iris ter Schiphorst and Helmut Oehring (G)

Graphics by Hagen Klennert

World Premiere

26 October 2000 Deutscher Pavillon, EXPO 2000, Hannover

Conductor: Christian Hommel

Light: Lutz Deppe

Company: Ensemble Aventure

Scoring

3 soloists

0.1.bcl.1—0.3.0.0—perc(3)—elec.gtr—elec.bass gtr—kbd—4vln—live electronics

Synopsis

In *Der Ort ist nicht der Ort*, the authors reflect their own work, visualising the main subject of their creative work, which consists of the search for communication. By the interaction of music, graphics and light, formal structures are transferred into constellations of space and thus made accessible to the senses and intellectual perception. A play of words, sounds and sights is presented, permanently shifting its positions and expressing the longing for comprehensibility, and for a home within an environment which, by misunderstandings and broken continuity, turns into a no-where. The desire to communicate is negated by inability.

Silence Moves I⁽¹⁹⁹⁷⁾

60'

Soundtrack for an imaginary film

Text by Iris ter Schiphorst (G)

World Premiere

12 October 1997 Kleines Schauspielhaus, Dresden

Voice: Anna Clementi

Scoring

Voice

prepared pft/sampler—elec.bass gtr—vln.vlc—live electronics

Synopsis

In *Silence Moves I* I want to pursue the very particular relationship between writing and sound, or seeing and hearing, in 'occidental music' and translate it musically as 'audible writing' and 'visible sound'. In my opinion, 'occidental music' is unthinkable without the 'notation' of forms (the development of specific functions and rhythms of forms at the cost of others etc). These 'inscriptions' tell a completely different tale of 'occidental music' and it is these I wish to represent and make legible. *Iris ter Schiphorst*

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