

Iris ter Schiphorst



Iris ter Schiphorst (Photo © Silvia Beck)

ENSEMBLE AND CHAMBER WITHOUT VOICE(S)

... und Pommernland ist abgebrannt

(deutsches Schreiben)

2003

11 min

for wind trio

bfl.corA.bcl(ampl)-CD player-effect machine

World Premiere: 09 Nov 2003

Berlin, Germany

Trio e-vent: Kirsten Reese, Birgit Schmieder, Erich Wagner

Aus Kindertagen: verloren

(From Childhood Days: Lost)

2004/05

22 min

for 2 instrumental ensembles, electric guitar and performance CDs

Text: Iris ter Schiphorst and quotations from the novel 'Emilia gerät in die Kriegswirren oder O der neue Tag' by Karin Spielhofer (G)

left side of room: prepared pft(=sampler)-vln.vlc; right side: 2vln.vla.vlc-elec.git

"It was left to the fourth composer, Iris ter Schiphorst, to set things straight and redeem the ideal of advanced, demanding musical composition with a brilliant new work. Commissioned by the radio station Deutschlandfunk, the premiere was the climax of the 'Forum of New Music 2005'. Concrete instrumental sounds were amplified throughout, enriched and 'charged' by sampled recordings... In Aus Kindertagen: verloren (From Childhood Days: Lost), a highly-organised ensemble setting is interspersed with children's rhymes and quotes from novels... a technique the composer also employed in other works... The bottom line is that this portrait concert came as a godsend for the 'Forum of New Music 2005'. (Georg Beck, neue musikzeitung 4/2005)

"The biggest sensation was no doubt the Berlin-based composer Iris ter Schiphorst. Her rich soundscapes are made up of an original mixture of noisy sounds (with the instruments amplified electronically) on the one hand and highly expressive musical narration on the other. Commissioned by Deutschlandfunk, Aus Kindertagen: verloren enthralled the audience with its coherence and the original use of the electric guitar ..." (Bonner General-Anzeiger, 9 March 2005)

World Premiere: 05 Mar 2005

DLF Sendesaal, Köln, Germany

Anton Lukoszevics, vlc / Gordon MacKay, vln / Christoph Grund, pft // Ensemble 01 / Daniel Göritz,

La Coquille et le Clergyman

Musik zum gleichnamigen Film von Germaine Dulac

2004

40 min

for 12 instruments and soundtrack

0.0.0.0-0.0.0.0-2 pft(pre).sample keyb-harp-eg-perc(2)-CD-str(1.0.1.2.1)

"The music of the Dutch/German composer Iris ter Schiphorst related to the film quite naturally... a genuine unity of image and music. Sometimes it follows the associations very precisely, sometimes it takes its own path. Ter Schiphorst manages to elicit a very individual sound from the instruments: thin and unreal. This fits the film superbly ..." (NRC Handelsblad, 7 April 2005)

"The interwar years are one of the most exciting periods in the history of cinema. The young medium was a welcome playing field for the avant-garde of art forms in which the audience – whether in private circles or in public cinemas – was given the opportunity to watch radical or even scandalous things. Not long after making viewers acquainted with naturalistic celluloid representations of reality, the first artists set about thoroughly deconstructing their all-too-familiar viewing habits. When expressionism along the lines of Wegener, Murnau or Lang had become the stylistic mainstream, directors like René Clair, Fernand Léger and even agitprop artists such as Joris Ivens came up with short films which often caused a public stir. Within this cinematic world, between expression and Dada, Charlotte Elisabeth Germaine Saisset-Schneider (whose pen name was Germaine Dulac) earns a special place. She was one of the first to introduce surrealist techniques into film-making. Whilst in Paris, she created an unsettling, egregious work which broke the barrier between the representational and the absurd in both form and content – and two years before An Andalusian Dog.

La Coquille et le Clergyman (The Seashell and the Clergyman) is a psychoanalytic nightmare about sexual frustration and desire. In the very first sequence, the rather unspectacular entry of one of the three main characters is transformed into a horror scenario by extreme slow-motion: reality is disintegrating completely, giving way to visualised emotional states. People are crouched on ceilings, sharing heads along a vertical axis; desires flow out of people like ghosts while walls come loose from their foundations.

Each scene virtually overflows with visual showpieces such as double exposures, cross-fades, distortions and extreme contrasts of sharp and blurred images. Techniques like these are intended to visually externalise the troubled inner life of a clergyman who is pining after an unattainable beauty, challenged by a rival.

Another piece which tells a story in a much more conventional, though similarly controversial way, is L'invitation au voyage (Invitation to a Journey), a work about the secret desires of a married woman for erotic change. We follow her to a dubious night-club, on a journey which forms not only the title of the work but also describes its psychological plot. The shy but adventurous woman gains the attention of a handsome captain but is dismissed when he, discovering that she is married, loses his affection for her.

The collage technique – less spectacular than that of La Coquille et le Clergyman but used in an equally skillful way – is focussed on the main characters and is rarely interrupted by visionary excursions. Avant-garde artists of the 1920s often used music to heighten the effect of their visual ideas. A striking example, apart from the collaboration between René Clair and Eric Satie, is Fernand Léger's and George Antheil's 'Ballet mécanique'. Germaine Dulac, who was drawn towards film by 'beautiful background music' (see fd 22/02), is another director who shows a strong affinity with music as an element of film. Unfortunately, no scores or musical sequences to her two short films have survived, and the music used today follows a 21st-century approach. Fortunately, however, the present work did not dismiss the classic chamber music instrumentation in favour of the synthesizer improvisations so often heard in today's silent film arrangements.

Due to its numerous dance sequences and conventional nar

ETIUS (with Helmut Oehring)

ensemble version of: Als ob: Suite

2000

for flute, 2 cl, accordion, 2 perc

fl.2cl-perc(2)-pft-acc

Im Vormonat (with Helmut Oehring)

1997/8

15 min

for ensemble

oboe-bcl.bn-pft-perc-vln.vlc.db

World Premiere: 21 May 1998

Grosser Sendesaal, Saarbrücken, Germany

Ensemble Aventure

Marriage Proposal

for ensemble

Mischwesen (with Helmut Oehring)

after the poem SILENCE by Anne Sexton

for deaf mute soloist (female), three trumpets and keyboard
1998

20 min

Text: Anne Sexton, Iris ter Schiphorst, Helmut Oehring

World Premiere: 21 Nov 1998

Kunstencentrum, Gent, Belgium

Asko Ensemble

Conductor: Roland Kluttig

Mischwesen (with Helmut Oehring)

Version for deaf mute soloist, trumpet, bass clarinet, cello and keyboard
1998

20 min

Text: after the poem Silence by Anne Sexton and texts by Oehring/ter Schiphorst

Mischwesen (with Helmut Oehring)

Version for deaf mute soloist, trumpet, trombone, tuba and keyboard
1998

20 min

Text: after the poem Silence by Anne Sexton and texts by Oehring/ter Schiphorst

deaf soloist (female), trumpet, trombone and tuba

My Sweet Latin Lover

2002

15 min

for plugged flute, 2 percussions and 5 electric guitars

"... Iris ter Schiphorst's My sweet latin lover for the amplified solo flute, sampled keyboard, two percussionists and an electric guitar quintet brought the concert to a close with a brilliant success. The bright introverted band of sounds in which the flute and short texts are embedded is, time and again, broken up by jagged attacks. Schiphorst's uneasy idyll is an intelligent continuation of Frank Zappa's legacy ..." (Anton Sergl, Süddeutsche Zeitung, 10 June 2002)

My Sweet Latin Lover II

2002

10 min

for plugged flute, electric guitar and live electronics

Prae-Senz (Ballet Blanc II) (with Helmut Oehring)

1997

20 min

for violin, cello and prepared piano/sampler

"... an exceptional case in the so-called serious music – whether contemporary or not: a musical work written by two authors, self-taught Helmut Oehring (born in East Berlin in 1961) and his versatile companion, Iris ter Schiphorst (born in Hamburg in 1956).

Hardly known, she declares the conventional distinctions between pop, jazz and avant-garde invalid, just as the pressure to be up to date, which applies to suburban rappers as well as to IRCAM subscribers.

The music was written by hypersensitive Helmut Oehring, who suffered a trauma in his childhood (he is the son of deaf parents who has never seemed to have recovered from the 'sonic shock' of learning spoken language at the age of four and a half) and Iris ter Schiphorst, a 'pasionaria' of multimedia performance (the former bassist and rock drummer has devoted herself to the exploration of instrumental sounds). Thus marked by an inherent sense of devastation, the music still has a precursor in B.A. Zimmermann...

PRAE-SENZ, the first piece in the programme of Brussels-based Inctus Ensemble, is a direct allusion to the German composer: the trio ... entitled "Ballet blanc II" refers to Zimmermann's Présence (Ballet blanc...) ... like its precursor, it uses collage and quotations. Yet, in a radically oppositional way, the composers have banned the apocalyptic rush from their score, along with the spiritual elements. The red light of varying brightness gives the performers the impression that they have escaped into a bunker. Explosions and gunfire, understood in this sense, ... are abundant.

As in a rock concert, the scenery gives the music a strange air of ecstasy ..." (Pierre Gervasoni, Le Monde, 18 October 1998)

9790202521083 Violin, Cello, Prepared Piano, sampling keyboard

World Premiere: 17 Sep 1997

Hebbeltheater, Berlin, Germany

Inctus Ensemble

Zerstören

2005

10 min 20 sec

for ensemble

1.1.1.1.dbcl.0.dbn-1.1.1.1.1-perc(2)-pft-sampler-strings(1.1.1.1.1)

"One of the most impressive pieces of the festival was Iris ter Schiphorst's Zerstören which transforms the global omnipresence of violence into multifarious reactions in sound, creating an 'internal film' that captivates with an unfathomable thrill." (Dirk Wischollek, Neue Zeitschrift für Musik 4/2006)

"Zerstören, with its layers of sounds, its agitated sequences, its psychologically resonant vibrations and attacking noise, is a reaction to reality – a kind of self-defence in music." (Gerhard Rohde, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 16 May 2006)

"... The two sheets of sound that were slid into each other in Iris ter Schiphorst's gripping ensemble piece Zerstören (Destruction) had almost bodily presence. The energies accumulated in them finally burst, before slowly going out towards the end of the work." (Stefan Drees, Positionen 68, August 2006)

World Premiere: 05 May 2006

Theatersaal, Witten, Germany

Asko Ensemble

Conductor: Hans Leenders