



NICOLAUS A. HUBER

Nicolaus A. Huber, born in 1939, is along with Helmut Lachenmann one of the most interesting and highly regarded living German composers. He studied composition with Günther Bialas and Luigi Nono. His music is played and broadcast extensively in Europe. He has been guest lecturer in many European, Japanese and South-American conservatories and festivals. Huber has been teaching composition at the Folkwang-Hochschule in Essen since 1974. In the 1960s he has worked at the Munich's electronic music studio with Josef Anton Riedl. In the 1970s he was Fellow of the Cité internationale des Arts in Paris, Vice President of the German section of the ISCM (International Society for Contemporary Music) and then an active collaborator in a free theater group, touring West Germany for political revues and appearances at mass rallies. His work has earned him over the years

the Culture Prize of the City of Munich and the Berlin Advancement Prize for Music. Since 1992 Huber is Member of the Akademie des Künste in Berlin and Leipzig. Premieres and first performances of his works have been featured at many international festivals such as the Holland Festival in Amsterdam, the Musikbiennale in Berlin, the Donaueschingen Music Days, the Tage Neuer Musik in Hannover, the Festival d'Automne in Paris, the Venice Biennale, the Musica Festival in Strasbourg, Wien modern, Warsaw Autumn, Montepulciano in Italy and many others.

A very critical and discerning artist, Huber has always harbored a skeptical attitude towards the self-glorification of public musical life by virtue of his leftists leanings. Nevertheless, Huber does not compose like Hanns Eisler: functional music that expresses its solidarity with the people. Rather than attempting to appeal to the populist mind, Huber seeks to explore the archetypical essence of rhythm and sound. Nicolaus Huber's teaching is characterized by his critical stance and his broad knowledge of the musical repertoire. His lectures and master classes always generate very stimulating discussions.

“ALS EINE AUSSICHT WEIT...”

LITERARY QUOTES IN NICOLAUS A. HUBER'S MUSIC FOR FLUTE

PETRA MUSIC, flute
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Smith Recital Hall, Memorial Room
April 11, 2008
12:30pm

TALIA DICKER, cello
PEI-I WANG, piano
REBECCA MATAYOSHI, viola
JULIA KAY JAMIESON, harp
ANGELA SCHMID, oboe
USEON CHOI, clarinet

FIRST PLAY MOZART (1993) for Solo Flute

"First play Mozart" is Huber's only piece for Solo Flute. It was composed in 1993 in collaboration with the German Flutist, Roswitha Staeger. The piece focusses on the subject of repetition. The title does not refer to any specific work of Mozart, but can be seen as an invitation to creative listening: the beginning of Mozart's *Figaro Overture* can be seen as an example of repetition in the process of melody construction. In which disguise can motifs still be recognised in their development? The title does not directly refer to the nature of the piece but rather expresses the distance or proximity to Mozart's music. Even if the piece does not sound anything like something written by Mozart, both composers follow similar paths in constructing their music. This argument may open up the piece for the listener as a key to another era and time: If we see the human breath which carries the piece as a metaphor for life, the title could be seen in a larger connection with the past. Mozart's works remain "breathing" remnants of his life after all.

Huber writes in the performance notes: "It is recommended that one listens to Stockhausen's Study I and II in order to get an impression of the basic sound of the noise colours required here, of the breathing dynamics, the means of producing the shortest possible contrasts, melodic sequences of noise sounds, sequences of melodic tones and intervals which are highly expressive yet not stamped by instrumental technique, romantic expressiveness, the polyphony between volume and fingering... One could thus expand the aura of flute playing in a modern direction by using the instrument's resources to make the most of the organic creative structures of the player – which are a superior to mechanical structures – and to learn from the mechanical apparatus how to enter other expressive musical domains, since an apparatus does not know the inertia of organic creative structures and it can produce short, long, high, low sounds etc. at will. This would bring "lightness" and, perhaps, "freshness" into the work."

O DIESES LICHTS (2002) for Flute, Cello and Piano

Huber bases the piece on a poem by Benn replacing the nature of the poem by musical figures whilst keeping Benn's system of relations. This provides a point of departure to understanding the variable forces of gravitation in the music. The rhythmical patterns evoke reciting of poetry lines. The finale of the piece is called "Schwebung und Verschmelzung" (floatation and fusion). It incorporates passages that lead flute and cello in microtonally shifted unisonos, representing the unity between sea and land in the poem and at the same stressing the blurred borderline between the two spheres at the edge of the water. Gottfried Benn (1886-1956) was an expressionist German writer. Being a medical doctor, his texts are characterized by the integration of scientific terms and his metaphorical style is often connected to terms from pathology. Also, his poetry reflects a nihilistic attitude and existentialism.

Reise

O dieses Lichts! Die Insel kränzt
sternblaues Wasser um sich her,
am Saum gestillt, zu Strand ergänzt,
und sättigt täglich sich am Meer.

Es muß nichts zueinander hin,
die Alke, das gelappte Laub
erfüllen sich; es liegt ihr Sinn
im Mittelpunkt, den nichts beraubt.

Auch ich zu: braun! Ich zu: besonnt!
Zu Flachem, das sich selbst benennt!
Das Auge tief am Horizont,
der keine Vertikale kennt.

Schon schwindet der Verknüpfungsdrang,
schon löst sich das Bezugssystem
und unter dunklem Hautgesang
erhebt sich Blut-Methusalem.

Journey

Oh this light's! The island wreaths
star blue water around,
at the edge calmed, complemented to beach, and fills
itself daily with the sea.

Nothing must approximate, the plants fulfill themselves,
their sense lies well withing the center, which cannot be
violated.

Also myself to(o): tanned! myself to(o): basked! To the
shallow that names itself! The eye deep on the horizon
oblivious to verticality. The urge to tie knots is fading.

Already the context is resolved and under dark song of
the skin Methusalem of blood is raising.

“ALS EINE AUSSICHT WEIT...” (1996) for Flute, Viola and Harp

The piece is based on a poem written by 18th century poet Friedrich Hölderlin and incorporates objects of the poet’s surroundings: paper, wooden chair and seven stones representing the tower in which the demented poet spend the last years of his life: Through the window Hölderlin observed the seasonal changes in nature. “Als eine Aussicht weit” (far as an outlook) – refers to this view. The piece starts with a rhythmical quote in the harp part deriving from Beethoven's piano sonata op. 54 (the last bars of the first movement). Beethoven and Hölderlin were both born in 1770. Thus, the beginning of "Als eine Aussicht weit" incorporates an ending at the same time. Only after this ending point, Huber introduces an impressionistic quality of sound into the piece that is interrupted by intensified moments of expression.

Der Herbst

Das Glänzen der Natur ist höheres Erscheinen,
wo sich der Tag mit vielen Freuden endet,
Es ist das Jahr, das sich mit Pracht vollendet,
Wo Früchte sich mit frohem Glanz vereinen.

Das Erdenrund ist so geschmückt, und selten lärmert
Der Schall durchs offene Feld, die Sonne wärmet
Den Tag des Herbstes mild, die Felder stehen,
Als eine Aussicht weit, die Lüfte wehen

Die Zweig und Äste durch mit frohem Rauschen
Wenn schon mit Leere sich die Felder dann vertauschen,
Der ganze Sinn des hellen Bildes lebet
Als wie ein Bild, das goldne Pracht umschwebet.
d. 15. Nov. 1759

Autumn.

The shine of nature is a higher appearance,
where he day ends with many joys,
the year perfected with grand
where fruits and joyful shine unify.

The earth ball is thus decorated and noise crosses rarely
over the open field, the sun warms
mildly the autumn day, the fields stand out, ample as an
outlook,

The breeze moves twigs and branches with joyful noise,
when already the fields are changed into emptiness, the
whole meaning of the bright image shall live just like an
image surrounded by golden grandeur.

DON'T FENCE ME IN (1994) for Flute, Oboe and Clarinet

Huber gives several rejected working titles for this trio for flute, oboe and clarinet in B. They are *vom Bleiben der Klänge* (remnants of sound), *vom Bleiben in den Klängen* (remaining in sounds), or *vom bleiben im Klang* (remaining in sound); two Hölderlin quotes: *Daran rief ich, erkenn' ich sie, die Natur, an diesem stillen Feuer, an diesem Zögern in ihrer mächtigen Eile* (this is how I recognize nature, because of this quiet fire, this hesitation in powerful hurry), or *Es ist den Glücklichen so lieb, dies Zögern...* (This hesitation, so dear to the happy one) from Hyperion; as well as: *Mit Luigi Dallapiccola hoch Nono times N. A. Huber* (Dellapiccola to the power of Nono times Huber); *Entgleisung* (derailment) and *Don't fence me in*. The titles reflect a connection with tempo. Hesitation, as in the Hölderlin quote, can be seen as slow motion or even a moment of inner dialogue. The contradiction between hesitation and powerful hurry becomes a strong image that can be felt whilst listening to the piece. The importance of sound is another element in understanding what this piece is about. The three instruments are rhythmically often used as one, which adds an interesting variety of sound colour. The piece is also an example of Huber's dealing with traditional tonality. The chords symbolize the aspect of traditional tonality in the piece and may also refer back to the Cole Porter song “Don't fence me in”.