

Programme Notes (selection)

Initiation/s for flute (dbl. alto), E flat clarinet (dbl. bass clarinet), horn, piano, violin, and cello (2005)

Initiation/s could be described as a prelude or overture to a larger work that does not (yet) exist. As the title suggests, there are several ways for the listener to experience the piece, depending on which angle of focus is being chosen. Seen from a macro-level perspective, the work presents itself as one large structure, in which (musical) energy is constantly building up. This energy - particularly characterized by harmonic progressions - increases in a way that, ultimately, its metamorphosis into a destructive force becomes inevitable. This is demonstrated by spectral sounds that grow increasingly inharmonious over the course of the work. Eventually, by culminating in a bursting sonority, their breaking point is reached: all selective energy is lost, and the piece quietly ends in exhaustion.

This global phenomenon - the buildup of energy up to the point of breaking off the general development - can also be observed on a more localized level within the various subordinate structures (i.e. the smaller “initiation segments”). The harmonic development, however, is organized exclusively on a macro-level and thus remains unaffected. This way, a structural double-ground is created: the piece appears to recommence intermittently regarding its structural and gestural evolution, thereby suggesting a discourse characterized by sequences of multiple contrasting segments. The pitch progression, however, continues to proceed unfettered thereby giving the listener the impression of a rather continuous process. The exploration of the constantly changing degrees of tension, created by the imbalance of confronting one continuous with various discontinuous parameters, was of particular interest to me in this work.

défraîchir for large orchestra (2006/07)

The central idea of *défraîchir* (meaning: to pale or to eclipse) is the gradual deconstruction of a musical utopia. At the outset of the work, high-pitched fragile gestures are dragged downwards and eventually engulfed by complementary forces resulting in a loss of the delicate and frail purity of the beginning in favour of a series of conflicting dramatic processes. Over the course of the following sections various unsuccessful attempts to regain the initial state are depicted. Finally, these struggles lead to a different, inchoate lyric existence that ends the piece.

In relation to this idea, the confrontation of two different concepts of musical energy are of great importance: the constant flow of (low) energy characterizing the lyric sections at the beginning and end of the piece stands out from the, at times dramatically, fluctuating energy levels that define the middle sections of the piece.

Almost the entire musical material of this work is derived from four different clarinet multiphonics. These multiphonics generate both harmony and melody as well as rhythm and formal proportions. This composition technique aims at the creation of an organic musical language, which re-synthesizes complex instrumental sounds (the orchestra serving as a meta-instrument) as a starting point for constant development of musical material.

The organization of microtonality in this piece is based on two different concepts: the derivation of microtonal intervals from the aforementioned multiphonics and an intuitive, primarily expressive use. Due to the general difficulty of intonation within an orchestra the microtones in this piece have been applied with particular care. This is reflected in choosing quarter-tones as the smallest intervals as well as deliberately allowing for imprecise intonation leading to beatings. This latter aspect relates to the overall idea of loss of purity: the main function of the microtones therefore is to alienate, contaminate and distort the sounds.

LuftLinien for solo piano (2007)

LuftLinien ('Aerial Lines') was composed for Balder Neergaard as part of the Contemporary Music in Action project at the Royal College of Music, London. The aerial lines of the title refer to the use of the delicate and transparent high-pitched melodic lines that form the starting point of the processes of continuous metamorphosis of musical material throughout the piece.

The formal construction of the piece is based on the double-concept of the Golden Section and the *Fibonacci series*. These two principles are tightly related as the *Fibonacci* numbers are separated almost accurately to the proportion of the Golden Section. These two principles regulate all formal procedures on the macro as well as micro levels, as well as on the organization of harmony.

All pitches in *LuftLinien* are derived from the overtone series of G, D#, F# and B, where the choice of partials from each overtone series is based on *Fibonacci* numbers. For instance, partials 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89, 144 have been chosen from the overtone series based on B.

LuftLinien is constructed on a large-scale structure, which can be divided into six main sections. The linear textures of the opening section introduce the main motivic material, such as repeated notes, accented chords and rotating gestures, followed by a section of multi-layered pedaled sounds, introducing the momentum of simultaneity. Over the course of the third section these harmonies are transformed into sharply-edged chords, followed by a transitional section leading back to a recapitulation of the linearity of the beginning and the textural elements of the previous sections. A coda, in which all sounds gradually disintegrate, ends the piece.

Into the Dream for amplified string quartet in scordatura and electronics (2007)

The title, which is derived from the German poem of the same name by Rose Ausländer, refers to the main principle of the work in which various processes of *departure* from a previously defined origin are followed by transformations of this origin into a new (imaginary) existence. These processes take place simultaneously on many levels including macro- and microstructure as well as rhythmic and timbral organization. They are, however, probably most obviously noticeable with the way the pitch organization develops.

For the first movement, I developed a tone-system based on Just Intonation as a "given entity" - the beginning is therefore clearly dominated by the juxtaposition of complex harmonic fields containing various harmonious spectra. Nonstandard pitches are realized both by the use of open strings and natural harmonics on the string instruments and by the application of precisely generated micro-intervals in the electronic part. The first step of departure from this origin can be illustrated by a process of harmonic clarification: specific elements from singular spectra (as opposed to the poly spectral beginning) are filtered out and set into relation with other spectra. This results in a process in

which the verticality of the beginning is gradually folded out into horizontality whilst still remaining part of the original tone-system.

The second movement expands on this idea: here, a departure from the initial tone-system takes place. For a short period of time, the confrontation between two familiar tone-systems can be observed, as equitempered intervals performed by the acoustic instruments become juxtaposed with both compressed and augmented variants of just intervals in the electronic part.

In the end, however, the harmonies that were initially derived from different tone-systems are merged and thus become part of a new tone-system featuring alternate settings regarding pitch hierarchies. This new system stands symbolically for the inner world that is compassed at the very end of the piece. The transitional character of tone-systems in this work became the starting point for my extensive research into possibilities of working with different tone-systems which, ultimately, led to my concept of *dynamic tone-systems*.

Another noteworthy layer of “departure processes” can be observed in the varying relationship between acoustic and electronic components throughout the work. In the first movement, both forces initially complement each other, however, not without maintaining their respective individuality. The degree of integration is increased to the point of nigh rhythmic unison precisely at the moment when the final remainders of poly spectral harmonies from the beginning disappear in favor of harmonic clarity. The second movement then presents a reversal of this procedure: here, both forces drift apart from each other thereby (re-) gaining their individuality. The very end of the piece shows the string quartet having emancipated itself from the electronics which, in reverse, have become increasingly sparse and pointillistic.

Evocazione del mare for amplified $\frac{1}{4}$ -tone bass flute and electronics (2008/09)

Evocazione del mare (‘Evocation of the sea’) marks the first of three pieces to be written for the ensemble *rarescale*. It received its premiere at the ‘UK Microfest 3’ at Walton on Thames on 7 March 2009.

One of the principle ideas behind this work is to explore different stages of interaction between two diverse characters, the flute and the electronics. The main dual function of the flute is to both trigger and articulate responses from the initially separate entity represented by the electronics. As the title suggests, this entity stands for an abstract form of ocean, which for me represents a mystic encompassing force rather than a real or concrete ocean.

Regarding its form, the piece could be subdivided into four major sections. The first section explores the flute’s attempts to interact with the electronics. By responding to the flute’s agitated impulses the electronics begin to gradually enclose the flute sounds. The second section then shows the two forces in conjunction: the flute has become integrated into the electronics. The third section depicts various types of conflict between the two entities eventually resulting in their separation. An electronic interlude leads to the final section of the piece in which the flute excitedly reflects upon its multi-faceted musical material while the electronics gradually withdraw.

The musical material for this piece is organized following two main principles: (1) fractal methods provide self-affine structures on micro- and macro-levels in order to establish an organic discourse of the work; (2) the pitch material is based on two spectra complementing each other which both become

subject to processes of Frequency Shifting. These processes result in complex sequences of gradually descending harmonic fields that can be heard throughout the entire piece.

sphères, déformées for amplified $\frac{1}{4}$ -tone alto flute, amplified guitar and electronics (2009)

Sphères, déformées marks the second of three pieces to be written for *rarescale* as part of the composer's association with the ensemble. The title evokes the paradox between an ideal state and its (intrinsically impossible) deformation, and thereby refers to one of the central compositional aspects of the piece: the installation of a double-ground regarding the interrelated layers of "expression" and "construction". As in many of my previous works, specifically developed microtonal pitch systems combined with the use of unusual sonorities play a decisive role in realizing this central idea. The piece consistently features elements of "instability", "transformation" and "deconstruction" and thereby introduces a ubiquitous sense of fragility.