

Anny Ballardini:

An Interview with **Peter Ablinger** after the performance of "voices and piano" with Nicolas Hodges on the piano at the Brunnenburg, Merano, Italy during the festival "Transart".

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It was a moving night, the one at Brunnenburg in Tyrol, with Mary de Rachewiltz in the front row as the host of the castle to listen to your music performed by Nicolas Hodges. And the voice of Ezra Pound opening the way to G. Stein, Pasolini, Lech Walesa, Mao Tse-Tung, Bonnie Barnett, Hanna Schygulla, Mother Theresa of Calcutta, Apollinaire, Bertold Brecht and Morton Feldman. Would you please like to introduce us to your work?

I like to think about Voices and Piano as my song-cycle, though nobody is singing in it: the voices are all spoken statements from speeches, interviews or readings. And the piano is not really accompanying the voices: the relation of the two is more a competition or comparison. Speech and music is compared. We can also say: reality and perception. Reality/speech is continuous, perception/music is a grid which tries to approach the first. Actually the piano part is the temporal and spectral scan of the respective voice, something like a coarse gridded photograph. Actually the piano part is the analysis of the voice: Music analyses reality.

What do all these people have in common, why did you choose them?

Till now I have finished 19 pieces. But the cycle is still in progress and should eventually include about 80 voices (around 4 hours of music). I don't have really a criteria for the choice of voices. Most of them are sort of "voices in me", voices that have become somehow a part of me, that impressed me somewhen, somewhere. Maybe when I have finished all 80 pieces I have found out what they do have in common and I can answer your question then.

You also work at what you call "noise music", can you please let us know more about it?

I don't like to call it "noise music". Both is wrong: "noise" and "music". In German I call it Rauschen. There is no English word for that: it's the sound of the wind, the sound of the sea... one could translate with "white noise" or "static noise". This part of my work is just too extensive to say anything about it in a few sentences. It is about sound totality, and about the monochrome; it's about the highest density of information in conjunction with its maximum redundancy - and mainly its about perception, and about observation of one's own listening. But to mention an example: there is a piece called WEISS/WEISSLICH 18 (White/Whitish 18) that consists of recordings of 18 different trees. Each tree is heard for 40 seconds, one after another, and there is just the (almost) static colour of these 18 different kinds of Rauschen without any additional electronic changes or compositional treatments.

From Austria, where you were born, you live in Berlin. A town I only visited once but that besides the extremely cold temperatures, it was round the end of February, impressed me for its imposing look. How do you live in Berlin?

When I'm outside Berlin or in another town I always have to go somewhere to see what's happening. In Berlin I have the feeling that things are

happening anyway, so I don't have to go anywhere. This means, that Berlin is the perfect place for me just to live and to work.

What do you think of transart as a mix-cultural event?

I just like it. It is very open to development. And if there were more festivals like this, all the problems I have with many of my recent works that don't fit into either strict concert situations or simple gallery-like presentations, would be solved.

Where do you think contemporary art is aiming at, which are the main directions an artist should follow?

This - fortunately - can not be told. Only repressive systems tried to answer this question for others. Every artist has to find out by himself.

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About the composer Peter Ablinger:

Peter Ablinger was born in Schwanenstadt, Austria in 1959. He studied graphics, played jazz piano, and studied composition with Gösta Neuwirth and Roman Haubenstock-Ramati. He taught in Berlin from 1982-1990 at the Musikschule Kreuzberg. In 1988 he founded the Ensemble Zwischentöne. In 1993 he was a visiting professor at the Muikhochschnle Graz. He has served as a guest conductor of Klangforum Wien and the Ensemble of the Inselmusik. He organized several festivals and concert series in Berlin, where he works as a free lance artist.

Peter Ablinger is among the few artists working with noise devoid of symbolism (i.e. as a signifier for chaos, energy, entropy, disorder, uproar, protest, destruction, for everything or for eternity; whatever). Instead, Ablinger's inquiry is into nature of sound, time and space, usually considered the main components of music. His findings reveal some dubious conventions believed to be irrefutable for music, recasting repetition and monotony, reduction and redundancy, density and entropy, as fundamental to musical perception. (Christian Scheib)

here is a link to a piece that is text, but on the other hand - for me - is music
<http://ablinger.mur.at/docu02.html>

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