

SIKORSKI

magazine



Speaking about Notes

New Ideas about Melodrama

**Sound and Meaning:
Contemporary Vocal Music**



Dear Readers,

The narrated story accompanied by music is, since Prokofiev's "Peter and the Wolf" at the latest, the most popular way of leading children to the repertoire of the concert stage. But melodramas existed already over two hundred years ago and they were certainly not intended for young listeners at that time. The melodrama has meanwhile been rediscovered in the 20th century and especially in contemporary music. And when authors such as Roger Willemssen take pen in hand, especially sharp wit and the most exclusive entertainment are guaranteed. In this issue we are pleased to show you the entire variety of the form of the melodrama with examples ranging from the great classics of the genre to the latest contributions to it.

Not spoken texts, but sung texts are often given individual treatment in present-day vocal music. The text selection, declamation and musical realisation also vary widely in our composers' latest contributions to this genre.

No less varied are the ways in which young composers treat older genres such as the string quartet and the solo concerto. Other composers, on the other hand, refer directly to "colleagues" from the past, dedicating works of their own to classics such as Mozart or Wagner.

Discover with us the "newest" New Music and the best pieces from our catalogues - works which have long since established themselves on concert stages throughout the world.

Dagmar Sikorski
Dr. Axel Sikorski




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Leyendecker: Viola Concerto

COMPARED TO ITS LITTLE SISTER, THE VIOLIN, THE VIOLA DOES SOUND SOMEWHAT AS IF ITS NOSE WERE STUFFED-UP. AND BECAUSE IT IS USUALLY DAMNED TO PLAY SLEEPILY DULL ACCOMPANIMENTS IN THE ORCHESTRA, IT HAS ALWAYS HAS TO PUT UP WITH A LOT OF FLACK.

Since world stars such as Yuri Bashmet, Kim Kashkashian and Nobuko Imai have been touring the globe with spectacular concertos for this instrument, including those by Alfred Schnittke and Edison Denissov, one need no longer worry about the tarnished reputation of the viola.

Ulrich Leyendecker, composer of concertos for clarinet, guitar, violoncello and piano, has now written a **Viola Concerto**. It was composed in 2007/08 after the "Mannheim Concerto" for double orchestra, commissioned by Wolfram Christ as conductor. Through the fruitful collaboration on this project, the idea of continuing this work resulted almost automatically. Thus the Viola Concerto, dedicated to the violist Wolfram Christ, came to be written. In the opinion of Leyendecker himself, the great masters of the past were unfortunately reserved as regards the combination of solo viola and large orchestra. "The shyness about using the viola, as an instrument

of the orchestra's middle range, in a soloistic manner, is understandable, since it is less able to penetrate through the ensemble than the violin or the cello." It was precisely this quality that particularly stimulated Leyendecker, as before with his Guitar Concerto. The viola's very own colour and the use of its registers which, in the bottom coincide with the middle range of the violoncello and, in the high range, with the middle-high range of the violin, results in rich, delicate hues – distinguished as a solo instrument and clearly different from the identical ranges of the violin and violoncello. "I have used these," continues Leyendecker, "particularly by making extensive use of the characteristic low register, but also of jumping back and forth between different registers. In addition to the purely soloistic aspect, there are diverse chamber-music combinations of the viola with other solo instruments of the orchestra." 



19.03.2010
KAISERSLAUTERN
Ulrich Leyendecker:
Concerto for Viola and Orchestra
Wolfram Christ, Viola
German Radio Philharmonic
Saarbrücken Kaiserslautern
cond.: Christoph Poppen

Speaking about Notes

– New Ideas about Melodrama

MANY PEOPLE COMPLAIN THAT THEY CANNOT UNDERSTAND THE SUNG TEXTS IN OPERAS. EVEN IF THIS COULD CONCEIVABLY BE A REASON FOR IT, THIS WAS NOT, OF COURSE, WHAT GAVE RISE TO THE MELODRAMA – A FORM LYING BETWEEN SPOKEN THEATRE, THE MUSICAL STAGE WORK AND THE CONCERT PIECE WITH ONE OR MORE SPEAKERS.

As one result of the so-called Parisian “buffoonist” dispute of 1752 to 1754 the melodrama achieved great importance during the French Enlightenment. The combination of spoken language, instrumental music and scenic performance reached the stage for the first time in 1770 with Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s “Pygmalion.” Melodramatic passages were later used as a new stylistic means in the German romantic opera as well, for example in the wolf ravine scene in Carl Maria von Weber’s “Freischütz.” The melodrama also remained important for German opera during the ensuing period, whereby mysterious and extrasensory themes always dominated.

The concert melodrama, whose ensemble can range from piano solo or chamber ensemble to full orchestra (plus speakers) offered many 19th-century composers, including Franz Liszt and Robert Schumann, a platform for experimental composition. Arnold Schönberg’s melodrama “Pierrot lunaire” (1912) and Igor Stravinsky’s “The Soldier’s Tale” (1918) are outstanding examples of how the form of the melodrama developed in the emerging modern period at the beginning of the 20th century. Since the 1950s, the use of the spoken voice is to be found in numerous works, increasingly in those for children as well.

Jan Müller-Wieland, who today lives in Munich as a composition professor, wrote his melodrama (called an ‘epiphany’) entitled “King of the Night” in 2003, for three female singers, 32 instrumentalists and additional electronics, based on his own text collage. Language is, at any rate, an important source of inspiration for this composer. In “King of the Night” he connects the Book of Job with poems by von Pia Tafdrup, and Nelly Sachs and texts by Georg Büchner, Jakob Böhme and excerpts from the Bible. The composer states that, for him, music is “living material.” Satire, irony and parody have always been essential components of his music.

The title “King of the Night” also refers to the famous coloratura aria of the Queen of the Night from Mozart’s “Magic Flute.” The basis, however, is

not the Mozartian operatic subject based on the beliefs of the freemasons, but the plot of this story in the figurative sense. The central statement of the work is that one must not lose one’s belief in God when blows of fate cause one to doubt. For Müller-Wieland, one insight was of particular importance: “that God and man are not at all distinguishable from each other. Basically, each person can recognise his God; what is godly remains open, however.”

The Ensemble Resonanz will perform the world premiere of a new melodrama by Jan Müller-Wieland and the author and television moderator Roger Willemsen entitled “Der Knacks” (The Crack-Up) at the Beethoven Festival in Bonn and at other venues this summer.

Willemsen’s new book “Der Knacks” unites features of the essay, literature, cultural scholarship and politics. Whilst reading the book, the honest and authentic style of the author fascinated him, explains Müller-Wieland. “At the same time, a kind of compositional exclusion and/or encircling procedure began in me,” says the composer. Willemsen reports on his childhood, the early loss of his father, nights in strange cities and regions, Afghanistan and the guards von Guantánamo. Willemsen’s love and extensive knowledge of music immediately brought the author and composer together.

Roger Willemsen will himself recite at the world premiere of the work. The Ensemble Resonanz is made up of 18 strings plus piano. The genre of the melodrama forms, as Müller-Wieland puts it, “the archaic key for the declamatory and fabulous crossing-over into new regions through a panorama made up of symptoms of old age, perceptions of transitoriness, injuries and types of death.”

God is always changing, but the devil and stupidity never change, Igor Stravinsky once commented on one of his most beloved works: a melodrama “The Soldier’s Tale” composed in 1918. Since the Ballets Russes were temporarily unable to perform that year and many theatres were not playing, the Swiss poet Charles Ferdinand Ramuz and Stravinsky conceived a miniature theatre piece for three persons and a small

instrumental ensemble which can be variably applied in the manner of a travelling, county-fair ensemble.

The background of the story is a soldier who, during his holiday from the front, walks home and on the way meets the devil disguised as an old man. The latter suggests that the soldier exchange his violin for a book of magic promising untold riches. It is clear that the soldier has just sold his soul for which he must then fight during the further course of the work. The violin thus becomes the symbol of regainable freedom. A sick princess and a whole series of traps set by the devil come into play. The soldier almost triumphs as the victor of the unequal duel, but then he is driven by longing back to his homeland and thus over a boundary which, according to the devil’s conditions, he was not allowed to cross. The devil triumphantly leads his victim to hell.

Stravinsky’s polyrhythmic and bizarre music in the unusual instrumentation of clarinet, bassoon, cornet, trombone, violin, double bass and percussion interrupts each scene with ironical commentaries.

The combination of distorted entertainment music including tango, waltz and ragtime with the classical forms of pastoral and chorale has made “The Soldier’s Tale” a key work in new music. The ensemble alone has also inspired later generations of composers. Jan Müller-Wieland, for example, adapted Beethoven’s Egmont Overture for the same septet combination used by Stravinsky in his melodrama.

Arnold Schönberg’s famous melodrama “Ode to Napoleon,” Op. 41 is not orientated on the Bible but on events of world history. A poem bearing this title by Lord Byron on which the composition is based was used by Schönberg to come to terms with the political events that had driven him into exile. The work is a clear reaction to the Second World War and the heavy responsibility that Germany had then laden on its shoulders. Byron’s poem can be interpreted as a general polemic against a dictator in the style of Hitler and is a devastating indictment of the claim to power of self-proclaimed leaders and politicians.

Schönberg chose a mixture of recitation and sprechgesang for the speaking voice. In so doing, he orientated himself, as he once remarked on the diction of Winston Churchill, whose voice he often heard on the radio. The instrumental ensemble is limited to a piano quintet. Alongside references to the "Marseillaise," one also primarily finds motivic references to works of Beethoven, especially from the 3rd and 5th Symphonies as well as "Wellington's Victory."

Moritz Eggert's work "**Der Andere**" (The Other) is not a melodrama in the usual sense, but a so-called "movable melodrama" for female singer and ensemble based on the short story "The Outsider" by Howard Philips Lovecraft. Howard Philips Lovecraft (1890-1937) is considered the most important successor to the great fantastic narrative tradition of Edgar Allan Poe. On the surface, his stories are true horror stories, but, as with Poe, there is usually a second layer of content, generally revealing a deeply pessimistic basic attitude towards mankind. In Lovecraft's stories of the so-called "Cthulhu Myth," all of mankind is nothing more than a toy of super-dimensional and almighty extraterrestrial beings, says Eggert. The short story "The Outsider" is, moreover, a coded self-portrait of the author Lovecraft. The first-person narrator is alone in a giant castle which is "infinitely old and horribly dark."

„Some beings must have taken care of me, but I cannot remember anyone besides myself ... I don't remember every having heard a human voice during all these years, not even my own... I often lie outside in front of the moat and longingly imagined being one of those happy people who must live in the sunny expanses behind the endless forests.." (from "The Other")

In such a confusing situation as the present, explains Moritz Eggert (whereby he regards the confusion itself as something positive, for it contains enormous creative potential, after all) it appeared to him stimulating to again conjure up a dead genre such as the melodrama, not entirely without – intentional - irony. For the "other" from the story by Lovecraft also discovers, at the end of his journey, that he has basically not moved. His journey into the light ends with the discovery of his own darkness.

Eggert wrote this piece for a concert at

the Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts, for which a first version for piano and female singer was composed especially for Salome Kammer.

The Russian composer **Leonid Hrabovsky** turned to a French text by Saint-John Perse in his melodrama "**La Mer**" for speaker, mixed choir and orchestra. The melodrama received its world premiere in the Netherlands in 1971 at the Gaudeamus Music Week. "La Mer" consists of four parts with a final section in which the choir particularly comes to the fore. As Virko Baley once wrote in the *Neuen Zeitschrift für Musik* in 1976 about Hrabovsky's melodrama, the work is reminiscent "of procedures of film technique with its montage-like fadeouts and crossovers and also has a fascination comparable to that of a film originating in its surface textures and sonic associations. The initial mood is decidedly 'magical,' building up very slowly from the 32' sub-bass of the organ in extreme pianissimo."

The incredible power of the sea, its elemental force comparable to that of the universe, dominates the texts of Saint-John Perse.

... Et c'est un chant de mer comme il n'en fut jamais chanté, et c'est la Mer en nous qui le chantera;

*La Mer, en nous portée, jusqu'à la satiété du souffle et la péroration du souffle, La Mer, en nous portant son bruit soy-
cheur du large et toute sa grande fraîcheur d'aubaine par le monde.*

Et c'est un songe en mer comme il ne fut jamais songé, et c'est la Mer en nous qui le songera:

*La Mer en nous tissée, jusqu'à ses ronce-
raies d'abîme, La Mer en nous tissant ses
grandes heures de lumière et ses gran-
des pistes de ténèbres ...*

*C'est un histoire que je dirai, c'est une
histoire qu'on entendra;*

*C'est une histoire que je dirai comme il
convient qu'elle soit dite ;*

*Et de telle grâce sera-t-elle dite qu'il fau-
dra bien qu'on s'en réjouisse ...*

*Ainsi louée, serez-vous ceinte, ô Mer,
d'une*

louange sans offense,

*Ainsi conviée serez-vous l'hôte dont il
convient de taire le mérite.*

*Et de salutation telle serez-vous saluée,
ô Mer, qu'on s'en souviennne pour long-
temps comme une récréation du
cœur ...*

*(Auszug aus «La Mer» nach Saint-John
Perse Dichtung «Amers») *



Melodramas

- CAREY BLYTON:
"Dracula". Melodrama for Speaker, Singing Voice and Chamber Orchestra, Op. 87 Text: Carey Blyton
- GUALTIERO DAZZI:
"L'Enclos." Melodrama for Speaker, Tenor, Choir and Chamber Ensemble Text: Armand Gatti
- MORITZ EGGERT:
"Der Andere" (The Other). Movable Melodrama for Female Singer and Ensemble Text: Howard Philips Lovecraft
- LEONID HRABOVSKY:
"La Mer." Melodrama for Speaker, Mixed Choir and Orchestra based on Verses by Saint-John Perse Text: Saint John Perse (from "Amers")
- FRIEDER MESCHWITZ:
"Das Robin." Melodrama for Speaker and Chamber Orchestra Text: Selma Lagerlöf
- JAN MÜLLER-WIELAND:
"Der Knacks" (The Crackup). Melodram für Sprecher, 18 Streicher und Klavier nach dem gleichnamigen Buch von Roger Willemsen Text: Roger Willemsen
- JAN MÜLLER-WIELAND:
"King of the Night." Epiphany for Three Female Singers, Electronics and 32 Instrumentalists
- ARNOLD SCHÖNBERG:
"Ode to Napoleon Bonaparte." Melodrama for Speaker, Pinac and String Quartet (String Orchestra), Op. 41, Text: Byron / Schönberg / Stadelmann
- IGOR STRAWINSKY:
"The Soldier's Tale." Music Theatre for Speaker and Chamber Ensemble Text: Charles Ferdinand Ramuz / Hans Reinhart (German)



Mozart

Wagner

Classics Never Die

WHAT ROLE DOES THE HERITAGE OF MUSIC HISTORY PLAY FOR PRESENT-DAY COMPOSERS?

THE NEW PIECE **"ETERNITY FOR WOLFGANG"**

BY **LERA AUERBACH** AND THE SOMEWHAT

"MY WAGNER" BY **JENS-PETER OSTENDORF**

FROM OUR CATALOGUES ARE ONLY THE TIP OF

A GIGANTIC ICEBERG. A WHOLE HOST OF COMPOSERS MAKE REFERENCE IN THEIR WORKS

TO CERTAIN COMPOSERS OF THE PAST AND THEIR CREATIONS.

This confrontation with tradition is usually a critical undertaking as well. **"My Wagner"** by **Jens-Peter Ostendorf** is, for example, hardly only an admiring homage to the dedicatee named in the title. The piece is, as Ostendorf once said, dedicated to Wagner in hate and admiration; hardly another composer lived and embodied the contradictions of the 19th century within himself as egocentrically and powerfully as did Wagner. In his 1983 composition for large orchestra, composed on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the death of Richard Wagner, some passages are marked by Wagnerian motives, but at the centre stands a completely independent new construction based on this "heritage." Ostendorf went on to say: "The subtle Klangfarbenmelodie around the Parsifal quotation at the centre of 'My Wagner' could not have been written without the conceptual art of instrumentation of this composer - so superficially disqualified as the Pied Piper of Bayreuth, ingenious dilettante of the Villa Wahnfried. Nor would Webern's Bach instrumentation have been possible without it."


The idea on which "My Wagner" is based leads to thrilling, ultimately very illustrative music full of quotations, without Ostendorf's having consciously forced these effects.

Lera Auerbach has now come to terms with the Salzburg master in a very special way in her new orchestral work **"Eternity for Wolfgang,"** which will receive its world premiere on 25 April in Koblenz performed by the Rhenish Philharmonic State Orchestra under the direction of Daniel Raiskin. The 18th century and the late classical period

have often occupied Auerbach. **"Ludwig's Nightmare"** for piano, for example, is about Ludwig van Beethoven, and the **"Dialogue with Stabat Mater"** for violin, viola, vibraphone and string orchestra is based on Giovanni Battista Pergolesi.

The Heidelberg composer Moritz Eggert also dared a confrontation with Mozart in his pieces **"Amadé, Amadé"** for quintet and **"From the Tender Pole"** for four singers, speaker and orchestra. Another large series of works based on Mozart was created by **Alfred Schnittke** with the ingenious **"Moz-Art"** cycle for various ensembles. **Wolfgang von Schweinitz** composed **Variations on a Theme by Mozart** for orchestra, Op. 12 and Nikolai Korndorf the **Mozart Variations** for string sextet. And **Mozart Variations** for orchestra have also been written by **Dmitri Smirnov**, who lives in England.

In the classical-romantic epoch and also at the beginning of the twentieth century, variation form was the most popular form for approaching the old classics. Beethoven and Brahms made extensive use of it, but so did many Russian composers of the late 20th century. The variations on a theme by Joseph Haydn **"Tod ist ein langer Schlaf"** (Death is a Long Sleep) for violoncello and orchestra, the **Variations on a Theme by Franz Schubert** for violoncello and piano and the **Variations on a Theme by Georg Friedrich Händel** for piano by **Edison Denissov** are highly stimulating works. In 1957 **Rodion Shchedrin** composed his **Variations on a Theme by Glinka** for piano.

There is much to discover in the way of classics in modern music. 

Moritz Eggert is a Member of the Academy of Sciences and Literature in Mainz

The composer **Moritz Eggert** has just been chosen to be a new member of the Academy of Sciences and Literature in Mainz. With him, the Literature Section has admitted six more personalities who represent music in the widest sense and who especially possess special competence in the interface area between literature and music, and who are also outstanding both in artistic activity and in the area of scholarship.

Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf: In Memory of His Teacher



On 28 February 2010 the Ensemble SurPlus performed the world premiere of the new piece **"... in memoriam ..."** for bass flute, piano, violoncello and double bass by **Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf**. It is a memorial for James Avery, the American pianist, conductor, new music pioneer and founder of the Ensemble SurPlus, who died in 2009. The instrumentation refers to the tradition of "in memoriam" works.

At the same time, each instrument has been assigned a definite "personalità," says the composer: bass flute as lamento bass; piano as death knell; double bass as a knocking sign from the past life; the violoncello in an extremely high range as an intimation of transcendence.

On the Wings of Song with a Clarinet

At the renowned "Musica viva" Festival in Munich, Christopher Corbett performed the world premiere of the piece **"On the Wings of Song"** for clarinet solo by **Daniel Smutny**. The title is more or less a programme; Smutny is concerned with realising special sound forms and playing techniques in the manner of a remotely cantabile tone. But Smutny wants to achieve yet another completely different contrast. In his imagination, he sets the faraway, only barely perceptible song against the figure of Harlequin from the Commedia dell'arte. This results, in his conception, in the whizzing movement of the wings, the bird's calm and elevated flight, musical ornamentation of an extended song arc, the ungraspable rapture of a conveyed tone, but also the hilarity of the virtuoso contortions of Harlequin.

Sound and Meaning: Contemporary Vocal Music

“IF LANGUAGE IS TO CONTAIN MUSICAL SOUND AND MUSICAL MEANING, IT MUST BE RELEASED FROM THE DEPENDENCE ON ITS SETTING; THE MEANING MUST BE SEPARATED FROM THE SOUND OF THE WORDS AND ITS ‘MATERIAL STRUCTURE’ MUST BE OBSERVED,” THE COMPOSER DIETER SCHNEBEL ONCE SAID.

In contemporary music this led to an unlimited field of experimentation between sound and the meaning of the words which moved and challenged authors and composers in equal measure. In the sound poetry of Kurt Schwitters during the first half of the twentieth century, for example, language takes on musical forms of expression, has recourse to phonemes and fragments apparently without content, marking a musical course with the means of language, rhythmically organised into patterns of repetition. On the other hand, the setting of certain texts in modern music is freed from the illustrative reproduction of their contents. This path often leads to sound-centred vocal compositions in which language and the pure utterance of the sounds are treated as being of equal importance.

The variety in all forms of contemporary vocal music is simply limitless. There are composers who collect text fragments as in a notebook, then process them, make collages of them and electronically distort them. Others transport text units into intermediary forms such as sprechgesang or completely new forms of expression in the area of vocal acrobatics which yield completely new colours from the human voice. The latest vocal compositions by our composers, premiered in late 2009/early 2010, are based on “real” texts set very differently or accompanied by the music.

Giya Kancheli's work “Dixi” for mixed choir and symphony orchestra, for example, belongs to those works that are classified in the area of mysticism in the widest sense. The Latin text quotations, arranged in an unconnected succession and without any apparent continuity, remind us of how relevant those problems that have existed since ancient times remain today. For despite the great progress that civilisation has made, this has not changed the world for the better, and the gap between good and evil continues to grow. Religious or worldly phrases such as “Mortuos plango” (“I mourn for the dead”), “Ad se ipsum” (“to oneself”), “Ora et labora” (“pray and work”) or “Ede, bibe, lude” (“eat, drink and be merry”) still today touch upon important aspects of our existence and appear in Kancheli's work like phrases of meaning subjected to a musically defined whole.

After the world premiere at the Bavarian Radio on 29 October 2009 in Munich, “Dixi” will now receive its Estonian premiere on 9 February 2010 in Tallinn and its Polish premiere on 12 February 2010 in Katowice.

The young Mannheim composer **Daniel Smutny** has turned to an historical musical genre in his madrigal book for 24 singers entitled “**Velouria**.” The piece received its world premiere on 14 February 2010 at the festival “ECLAT” in Stuttgart performed by the SWR Vocal Ensemble Stuttgart. The term “Velouria” could be associated with a song of the same title by the group “Pixies,” but that was only indirectly Smutny's intention. In his new work, he has combined poems by Friedrich Hölderlin and Georg Trakl with new settings of individual lyrics by Uphill Racer. Smutny's music sounds “vellutato,” which means “behind a curtain.” Through the choral polyphony of the 24 singers, serving him both as a double theatrical floor and also as the possibility of expressing contradictions, the material hereby attains an inevitable intensification, a kind of “movement forward,” as Smutny says, somewhat like the view of the dark rooms in David Lynch's “Blue Velvet” – a curtain without anything behind which draws one in and swallows.

**“In the car you don't speak
all the way you don't move
because you know
the sun is coming out”**


**“Blind and aware
it is not you who is moving
it's the world”
(lyrics von uphill racer)**

A new piece for a cappella choir entitled “**void. un delitto italiano. un epitaffio**” is by **Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf**. The Neue Vokalsolisten performed the world premiere of the work at the Festival “ECLAT” in Stuttgart on 13 February.

The title refers to Mahnkopf's “void-cycle” comprising ten works which will flow into the music theatre “void – Archaeology of a Loss.” The subtitle “un delitto italiano” is intended to refer to the fact that the film director Pier Paolo Pasolini, brutally murdered in 1975, stands for the post-war

Italian culture like hardly any other.

“The death of Pasolini – of to put it more precisely: his murder in 1975, unsolved to the present day – for me marks the abrupt interruption of a left-wing utopia that had spread out in the cultural west after the Second World War and was based on the belief that the modern capitalist world could be fundamentally changed, and that artists would have to play an eminent political role in this. 1975 showed the failure of the left-wing utopias and – especially unfortunately for Pasolini – the victory of modern consumerism. Especially sensitive people felt this earlier and drew their own consequences from it, not least of them Luigi Nono. The consumerism against which Pasolini so urgently warned has long overtaken us. Artistically, post-modernism developed, which is the utter opposite of Pasolini's absolute claim to truth. Is a Pasolini still possible today? What would he be like? Which artistic media would he use? From which cultural circle would he come?”

In my piece, I refer to the film ‘Pasolini. Un delitto italiano’ by Marco Tullio Giordana made in 1995 and to his book of the same name. The work is dedicated to Antonio Negri, one of the few but magnificent successors to Pasolini.” 

New Vocal Music

**09.02.2010
TALLINN**

Estonian premiere: **GIYA KANCHELI**, “Dixi” for Choir and Orchestra (Estonian National Symphony Orchestra; cond.: Anders Mustonen)

**12.02.2010
KATOWICE**

Polish premiere: **GIYA KANCHELI** “Dixi” (National Polish Symphony Orchestra; cond.: Tonu Kaljuske)

**13.02.2010
STUTT GART**

World premiere: **CLAUS-STEFFEN MAHNKOPF**, “**void. un delitto italiano**” for a cappella choir (ECLAT, New Vocal Soloists)

**14.02.2010
STUTT GART**

World premiere: **DANIEL SMUTNY**, “**Velouria: Madrigal Book for 24 Singers**” (ECLAT, SWR Vocal Ensemble Stuttgart)

Four Together into the Present – New String Quartets

THE GENRE OF THE STRING QUARTET HAS CHANGED CONSIDERABLY IN CONTEMPORARY MUSIC, AS HAVE OTHER CLASSICAL-ROMANTIC GENRES. SOME CONTEMPORARY STRING QUARTETS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED BY SPOKEN TEXTS, VOCAL PARTS OR NOISE PASSAGES, OR REQUIRE THAT INDIVIDUAL PLAYERS CHANGE TO OTHER INSTRUMENTS.

At the Witten Days for New Chamber Music, for example, a string quartet was performed during which the first violinist had to make use of a crackling record player simultaneously with his playing. Especially the string quartets of the Second Viennese School, works by Arnold Schönberg, Alban Berg and Anton Webern, and the contributions by Béla Bartók showed the way in dealing with the form at the beginning of the 20th century. Schönberg added a soprano voice to the four instruments in two movements of his 2nd String Quartet. It was Webern, however, who followed the path towards free atonality released from the strict twelve-tone technique in his three string quartets. After the genre had to overcome a crisis during the mid-twentieth century, especially in western countries, interest in the string quartet grew again after the war with important contributions by **Witold Lutoslawski** and Luigi Nono. Lutoslawski's fellow-countryman Penderecki dared to make the most extreme plunge of that time into noises, and the pioneer of electronic music, Karlheinz Stockhausen, in his Helicopter Quartet from the cycle "Licht," distributed the four participants of the string quartet in four helicopters.

There was a different course of development "behind the Iron Curtain" in Russia. With 15 works, string quartets in the oeuvre of **Dmitri Shostakovich** were numerically equivalent to the 15 symphonies, and are equally important in essence and content as well. Interestingly, the well-known Russian violist and conductor Rudolf Barschai has added several strings quartets of Shostakovich to the symphonic repertoire with excellent adaptations and orchestrations. His adaptations include **String Quartet No. 10, Op. 118** as well

as the legendary **String Quartet No. 8, Op. 110** for string orchestra, and he orchestrated the **String Quartet No. 3, Op. 73** for strings and woodwinds.

Another great string quartet composer is **Peter Ruzicka**. His contributions, as the musicologist Thomas Schäfer once wrote, show "in several perspectives, a composer whose music hesitates, leaves open, withdraws, searches for silence, remains silent – and yet suddenly breaks out again, comes out wildly, rebels as if in desperation." Six quartets from 1970 until 2008 have been composed so far; all of them are designated by subtitles pointing to extra-musical or philosophical correlations directly relevant to the work. A soprano is included in Peter Ruzicka's last contribution to the genre so far, **String Quartet No. 6** entitled "**Erinnerung und Vergessen**" (**Remembering and Forgetting**). „Erinnerung und Vergessen" looks far back into his musical thinking, Ruzicka once explained. "Past events, in the zone between forgetting and remembering, are brought into the present through circling around, penetration and assimilation. Found and invented musical shapes, including traces of a string quartet begun over forty years ago, reflect the development of my aesthetic awareness."

The latest contributions to the genre of the string quartet are by the young composers Jörn Arnecke and Daniel Smutny.

Jörn Arnecke completed his **String Quartet No. 3** entitled "**Wasserkreisel**" (Water Whirl) during a scholarship sojourn at the artists' house Villa Concordia in Bamberg. The work, commissioned by the Brandenburg Theatre, will receive an advance premiere on 17 April 2010 at the exhibition opening of the visual artist Gerhard Göschel at the Kunsthalle

Brennabor in Brandenburg. The official world premiere takes place on 22 May 2010 during the course of the "Long Night of Chamber Music" at the Brandenburg Theatre.

Arnecke and the painter Gerhard Göschel enjoy a close personal friendship of ten years' standing. The painter and the young composer have, in fact, mutually profited from each other in their respective work. Gerhard Göschel's installation "Weeds in Paradise," for example, as Arnecke states, shifted the latter's electro-acoustic piece "Coup, coup, coupe" into a darkly impressive sphere which lends the piece a deeply emotional quality. The illustrative title "Wasserkreisel" of the new string quartet is also based on a painting by the Göschel. **Daniel Smutny** has won the Stuttgart Composition Prize for the second time already for his string quartet "**So zaghaft diese Worte der Nacht**" (So Hesitant, these Words of the Night), premiered by the Stadler Quartet on 14 February 2010 during the course of the Festival "ECLAT" in Stuttgart. 

New String Quartets

14.02.2010
STUTTGART

World Premiere: **DANIEL SMUTNY**,
„So zaghaft diese Worte der Nacht"
(So Hesitant These Words of the
Night) (String Quartet)
(ECLAT, Stadler Quartet)

17.04. 2010
BRANDENBURG

World Premiere: **JÖRN ARNECKE**,
„Water Whirls" (3rd String
Quartet) (= preliminary premiere)
22.05.2010 (= official world premiere)

Commission from the Staatskapelle Weimar for Ferran Cruixent

The Staatskapelle Weimar has commissioned the young Spanish composer **Ferran Cruixent** to compose an **orchestral work** to be premiered on 2 May 2010 in Weimar under the direction of Christoph Poppen.

World Premiere of the First Symphony by Pettersson

The Swedish symphonist **Allan Pettersson** left his **First Symphony** in an incomplete state. The composer and trombonist Christian Lindberg has now succeeded in completing the work. He will himself conduct the world premiere with the Norrköping Symphony Orchestra on 14 January 2010.

NEWS

New Work by Sofia Gubaidulina

We anxiously await the world premiere of new, so far untitled **Work for viola, double bass and two guitars** of **Sofia Gubaidulina**, to be premiered in Passau on 30 June 2010.