

Preface

Once again a well-documented guide through the program of this year's Ars Electronica is presented to the public and will surely find the customers' interest.

The dominating leitmotiv through the whole of this special festival in the course of the "International Brucknerfest", of which the Ars Electronica is an integrated part since its introduction in 1979, presents itself rather as a triad, uniting the three terms "art, technology, society" in a new entity.

The program of this latest Ars Electronica (the fifth by now, following a biennial rhythm since 1982) is — like in the past — a definitely progressive, future-oriented program; the experiment, the quest for new obliging forms and phaenotypes of art playing an important role.

Another fundamental characteristic of each Ars Electronica in Linz shall be that the organizers' activities — which are simultaneously artistical and scientific, both effective also in economical areas — might also attract new parts of the public, those who until now have stayed rather distant from the traditional concert activities.

This is done in a twofold manner this year: On one hand the "Posthof" — a centre for alternative culture — becomes part of the scenery and on the other hand a lately very active cultural fringe party, organized in the "Linzer Stadtwerkstatt" (Linz City Workshop), is fully integrated with a couple of single performances and activities into the multicoloured palette of Ars Electronica's events.

Not less than seven pertinent premières can be found in this year's program. The public will be confronted with the "First Great Electronic Video Opera" by Peter Weibel, with a "Turbulent Operetta in Electro-Acoustical Manner" by the two Linz designers Bogner/Altmüller and the Viennese experts in the field of electronical music Mechtler/Egger/Schu in the new "Posthof". The duo Bognermayer/Zuschrader — known from former first nights in the Brucknerhaus — will realize its oratorio "Bergpredigt" ("The Sermon on the Mount") in the New Cathedral (Neuer Dom).

The undisputed sovereign of this Ars Electronica is undoubtedly the Japanese Isao Tomita. His monumental Open-Air — entitled "Mind of the Universe" — tries to raise a kind of universal history of the world and of mankind by integrating the landscape along the Danube in front of the Brucknerhaus with "Laser, Light and Fire" in cooperation with a gigantic loudspeaker equipment transporting electronic sounds.

Other focuses — still as exclusive premises — are built up by a Science Fiction Projection by Thomas Pernes and the "Tanztheater Wien" in a preview upon the year 2081, "Describing Planes of an Expanding Hypersphere" by the New York composer Glenn Branca and his ensemble as well as a "mythological-electronical performance with living electronical pictures" by the Paris group Transcenic/Théâtre d'en Face, the latter work being entitled "Collision".

The Belgian electronic-musician Leo Küpper finally will realize a variably controlled "sound-dome installation" in the Brucknerhaus.

Almost a trade-mark and partially responsible for Ars Electronica's world-wide renown is the "Linzer Klangwolke" ("Sound Cloud") establishing the link to the Bruckner Festival, and will be presented — as the counterweight to Isao Tomita's opening — as the finale of Ars Electronica 84: Towering high above the town, Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 will be heard, played by the Zagreb Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Milan Horvat; an appeal to the world for peace, of which we all cannot deny our responsibility.

The scientific setting of Ars Electronica seems to be especially solid:

A workshop in the Upper Austrian Studios of the Austrian Radio and Television (ORF) about "Digital Art" — under strongest international participation — as well as a symposium about "The Future of Austria — Life in 2019" (which is exactly 35 years after George Orwell's 1984) and another about the effects of "Microelectronics for People" will be dealt with. The latter is largely to the credit of the still young Institute for Micro-Processor-Technology at the Johannes Kepler University of Linz, but is also based on the intense Cupertino with LIVA and ORF.

All this shows the high demands which the idea-producing and organizing committee of Ars Electronica have to meet in the presentation chosen.

To all of them we want to express our thanks, not to forget the sponsors and promoters of this individual Biennale, for if the Community of Linz bears the financial weight of the larger part of the expenses, the festival still depends on the goodwill and aid of public subsidy funds.

Let us hope that also the public takes the chance offered for participation and cooperation in financing this festival by their visitation, since there will not be many festivals that have as many presentations free of entrance fees, and it seems almost impossible to handle a festival in a more philanthropic way.

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Lord Mayor of the regional capital Linz