

## Sonorous Embodiment

Individualism, innovation, experimentation with new sounds, new technologies, techniques and modes of expression—keywords for New Music in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Striving to achieve diversity, a distinctive signature style and immediacy in making an artistic statement. Artists taking a stand in opposition to conflict-free harmony spanning the globe. Tension and multiplicity are the most precious assets of contemporary musical development—an interplay of form and sound, multiplicity of meaning and spectral diversity. Those advancing it are prepared for exploration and transformation, derive joy from experimentation, run risks to bring forth new ranges of significance.

Visitors' auditory comprehension is challenged and their acoustic reality expanded. There is a very close reciprocal relationship between creating music and experiencing music intensified by visualizations. Up until the last century, music was mostly brought forth by human beings directly, but then technological developments brought about a transformation. Even without direct human involvement, sounds can be produced and presented, though these are satisfactory only to a limited extent. Thus, despite the expanded possibilities technologies make available, the human being remains musically significant as a transformer, and it is precisely this nexus that will be featured in this year's concert evening. Great 20<sup>th</sup> century composers will be linked up with innovative contemporary developments, but while this is going on, the spotlight will always remain focused on human beings—their performances, their bodies, their voices.

This sixth installment of Ars Electronica's gala concert evening gets back to this series' roots by focusing on the man-music-technology nexus. Once again in 2008, this event is made possible by successful collaboration with the Bruckner Orchestra Linz led by conductor Dennis Russell Davies. The concert itself will establish a link between what might be seen from a contemporary perspective as "old" New Music and the latest trends in this genre. It gets underway at the Lentos with the MIDI piano artistry of Maki Namekawa. The Main Hall of the Brucknerhaus will be the setting for performances of orchestral works by Elliott Carter (who will be celebrating his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday this year), young Dutch composer Michel van der Aa and Edgar Varèse's *Amériques* accompanied by live visuals to create a true multi-sensory experience. In between, there's old going hand-in-hand with new: Dieter Kaufmann's work *Portrait of a Woman in the Mirror*, a 35-year-old work for tape recorder from the electro-acoustic genre together with an experimental film made by his son in 2006. In the third part as well, the program will continue to interrelate tradition and high-tech. The human voice—heretofore heard from only during the soprano solo in Michel van der Aa's work—now takes the spotlight. A piece by Chinese composer Qin Yi combines vocals with the music of a traditional Chinese string instrument. Next is a performance by American vocal artist Pamela Z. The final highlight of this program is *preENTER*, an audiovisual performance that calls for interactive audience participation.

Text: Bianca Petscher

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- **ZhenRu II**  
Pipa: Qin Yi
- **Conlon Nancarrow**  
**Studies for Player Piano**  
Piano: Maki Namekawa
- **Elliott Carter**  
**Variations for Orchestra**  
Performed by the  
Bruckner Orchestra Linz  
Conductor: Dennis Russell Davies  
Visuals: Jorn Ebner
- **Dieter Kaufmann**  
**Portrait of a Woman in the Mirror, op. 24**  
Video: Ulrich Kaufmann
- **Michel van der Aa:**  
**Here [to be found] for soprano,  
chamber orchestra and soundtrack**  
Performed by the  
Bruckner Orchestra Linz  
Conductor: Dennis Russell Davies  
Soprano: Anna Maria Pammer  
Visuals: Aaron Koblin, Aaron Meyers
- **Alvin Curran**  
**Crystal Psalms**
- **Edgar Varèse**  
**Amériques**  
Performed by the  
Bruckner Orchestra Linz  
Conductor: Dennis Russell Davies  
Visuals: 1n0ut
- **Qin Yi**  
**Yu-Tian Cong He**  
Pipa: Qin Yi  
Voice: Xu Zhibo  
Sound Engineer: Fang Dalei
- **Pamela Z**  
**Voice and Electronics**
- **preENTER**  
Music: Pentatones  
Installation & Video: YouAreWatchingUs



*Sonorous Embodiment* is a further step in an ongoing collaboration between the Brucknerhaus Linz and Ars Electronica that aims to create experimental fusions of music and new visual forms of expression.

Curators:  
Dennis Russell Davies, Wolfgang Winkler,  
Heribert Schröder, Gerfried Stocker, Bianca  
Petscher



■ **Conlon Nancarrow**

*Studies for Player Piano*

Bösendorfer CEUS Piano: Maki Namekawa

Creating superhuman music with no consideration paid to the human capabilities of musicians who would be called upon to play it, single-mindedly pursuing the power of the artistic imagination—these were the visions of Samuel Conlon Nancarrow. The composer was born in 1912 in Arkansas and died in 1997 in Mexico. His approach to creativity meant that he long remained an outsider in American musical history, but he had never sought public recognition for his work in the first place. A mechanical, programmable instrument, the player piano, was the device that made him independent of interpreters and enabled him to fully exploit technical possibilities and explore musical extremes. For example, he worked intensively with temporal sequences and used them as structural means, overlaying rhythms, meters and tempi in order to arrive at a new mode of musical expression. After having emigrated to Mexico to escape the political atmosphere prevailing in the US, recordings of his *Studies for Player Piano* brought him international fame.

Now, state-of-the-art MIDI piano systems have taken the player piano concept to the next level of sophistication and offer pianists the technical and creative means to play Conlon Nancarrow's pieces live.

Text: Bianca Petscher

■ Elliott Carter  
**Variations for Orchestra (1955)**

Performed by the Bruckner Orchestra Linz, conducted by Dennis Russell Davies  
Visuals by Jorn Ebner

Elliott Carter was born in 1908. One of the most important American composers, he has remained creatively productive to this day. In recent years, he has composed several very important works of orchestral and chamber music. His 2007 output was impressive indeed: a clarinet quartet as well as works for solo instruments, for solo vocalist and for orchestra.

Carter's breakthrough came relatively late with his first string quartet (1951). In it, he particularly develops rhythmic contrasts combined with frequent tempo changes. He expanded this polyrhythmic format in *Variations for Orchestra*, in which he rejected the traditional structure of theme, variations and finale by introducing interruptions and two additional refrains. Following an introduction, the theme is put through highly contrasting variations ranging from extreme agitation to almost complete standstill. The refrain features a rising and a falling figure—one proceeding faster and faster; the other slower and slower. And it is precisely this overlaying of different entities that makes the polyphonic character and the polyrhythmic structure of the work really stand out.

Text: Bianca Petscher



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### ■ Dieter Kaufmann Portrait of a Woman in the Mirror

Portrait  
Portrait of the woman  
Portrait of the woman in the mirror  
Portrait of my wife in the mirror  
Portrait of me in the mirror  
I myself in the mirror

I

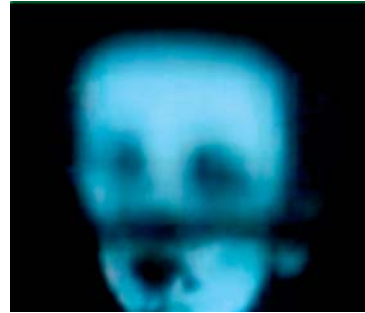
by  
for  
and  
with

GUNDA KÖNIG

Film: Krzysztof Rogulski  
Remixed by Ulrich Kaufmann  
Electro-acoustic composition  
with the voice of Gunda König

Created in the studios of the  
Groupe de Musique Expérimentale de Bourges

1973 / 20 minutes



In early June 1973 in Bourges, I made recordings of my wife's voice. At first, there was no musical concept for the composition. We thus began with the attempt at acoustic self-representation. After a few days, Gunda departed and over the days that followed I worked out my reaction to her vocal depiction of herself. For both of us, the resulting sound was, in some ways, surprising if not utterly shocking.

For me, it contained a series of situations that reflected the cliché-ridden image of a woman in our society. Or are these concepts themselves clichés, overdrawn formulations, a sort of "new poetic realism," images of aggression, pain, remembrance—aired intimacies?

Texts and an optical "track" as the next level of implementation are meant to inscribe the emotional basis, to shift the women's situation out of the personal realm into a socially critical, binding one.

Shortly thereafter, the 19mm black & white film by Krzysztof Rogulski was shot in the flat we were living in at the time at the Karl-Marx-Hof apartment complex in Vienna. Together with the colorful Single 8 film fragments from our family archive, that was the first multimedia realization of our music-theatrical conceptions, which we then expanded further at the K&K Experimental Studio we founded in 1975.

For the 2006 world premiere in Malmö of a full-evening program entitled *SoloDue*, Ulrich Kaufmann created a small work of cinematic art on the basis of this film made in 1974 (the year of his birth). In it, he by no means goes easy on the images of his mother. But it is also the aesthetic tension between the generations that is expressed here.

■ **Michel van der Aa**  
**Here [to be found] for soprano, chamber orchestra**  
**and soundtrack (2001)**

Performed by Bruckner Orchester Linz, conducted by Dennis Russell Davies

Soprano: Anna Maria Pammer

Visuals: Aaron Koblin, Aaron Meyers

In his *Here trilogy*, composer Van der Aa draws the listener into the musical exploration of the clash between the individual and his surroundings. His irrepressible fascination for theatrical and visual means is one recurring feature of the trilogy. A recognizable harmonic signature is evidence of his economical use of material. The harmonic DNA of the *Here trilogy* consists in each of the three sections of the same eleven chords, both in the orchestra and the soundtrack. *Here [to be found]* (2001) is officially the closing section of the *Here trilogy*, but it was in fact the first to be composed. The density of the ideas present clearly suggests that Van der Aa realized that he could expand the theme of the individual vs. her surroundings in two additional sections. *Here [to be found]* sketches, using a minimum of harmonic means, a thoroughly oppressive mood, introduced by wispy chords in the strings.

The inevitable sense of drama of *Here [to be found]* comes primarily through the process of attraction and repulsion between the soprano, chamber orchestra and soundtrack. Just as in *Here [in circles]* the composer penned the tranquil yet ornate texts himself; words that express the meandering reveries of the emotionally wayward dramatic “ego” (the soprano). She searches for—and finds—contact with the orchestra and soundtrack, but thereafter only sinks deeper into her own musical micro-universe. The soprano drifts ever further from the elements around her, the text as well as the music.

The soprano’s icy disengagement is reflected in Van der Aa’s music. He manipulates the music’s linear progression by snipping it up and reintroducing these fragments on the soundtrack in altered form. In doing so—rewinding and fast-forwarding—he creates an additional dimension of time. The sensation of a vacuum that arises when the music „freezes“ and then “thaws” parallels and reflects the isolation felt by the soprano, and at the same time acts as an abstract expression of her mood. The singer, together with the orchestra and the soundtrack, searches for a new departure point. In that respect, drama and structure in the *Here trilogy* are constantly indivisible.

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**Here [to be found]**  
**Michel van der Aa**

Motionless I find myself on the  
ground. Covered with questions. Stones  
invade stomachs. Windows stand starless  
still. With little or no light  
I clearly see all I can  
see. An order without lines, sparks or  
colour. The charts show no coherence.

Now should I: Breathe the muddied night air,  
Tear the light curve off its asymptote,  
Cage my myriad mind instantly,  
Without faltering attempt  
the impossible and find  
my longitude? A wounded  
shooting star. Nothing catches  
fire and I am unaware.

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### ■ Edgar Varèse *Amériques*

Performed by the Bruckner Orchestra Linz, conducted by Dennis Russell Davies  
Visuals: InOut

“Our instruments and the way we write music have to be changed in order to meet the new demands posed by an art that is itself necessarily changing amidst a world in transition...”  
Edgar Varèse (1883–1965) is now considered one of the most significant and influential composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Even if only a modest portion of his oeuvre has been preserved, every single one of his works has nevertheless assumed a position of great importance in the contemporary musical repertoire. Throughout his life, Varèse strove to create new musical possibilities and sought to develop a personal tonal vocabulary. In addition to music, he also displayed great interest in physics and mathematics, and applied the fundamentals of these fields to his music. With *Amériques*, his work for a large orchestra, Varèse impressively succeeded in expanding his personal musical parameters and creating his first fully valid work—a massively expanded percussion section, music that moves freely and pervasively in space, a constant ascent and descent of noise-like sounds, and the use of sirens. Varèse thus gives his first auditory impressions of New York combined with images of the city that are the fantasies of a childlike imagination. *Amériques* was performed for the first time in 1926 by the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Leopold Stokowski.

Text: Bianca Petscher

### ■ Pamela Z: Voice and Electronics

Pamela Z will perform a suite of short works for voice, electronics and video, including excerpts from her new work *The Pendulum*.





■ **Yu-Tian Cong He  
for Voice, Pipa and Interactive Electronics**

Composer and Programmer: Qin Yi

Pipa: Qin Yi

Voice: Xu Zhibo

Sound Engineer: Fang Dalei

*Yu-Tian Cong He* was commissioned by the Shanghai International Electroacoustic Music Week in 2006. The idea of the work comes from a ceremony of Lamas chanting. The people participating in the ceremonies are surrounded by the cluster of sounds produced in chanting. When you are there, your heart is filled with the sounds and your body is enveloped by the sounds. You feel nothing else.

The live performance of singer and the pipa soloist is recorded, transformed via overlapping replay and spatialization through an 8-channel system, which creates a rich space full of various sounds where audiences placed themselves.

It is also expected to provide a structure to allow the dialogue between the performers and their multiple mirror variants produced by the live electronics and finally approaching a harmonic. The version performed at the Ars Electronica Festival is a world premiere.



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### ■ preENTER Pentatones, YouAreWatchingUs

*preENTER* is a symbiosis of artist and audience, of installation and stage, of image and sound. *preENTER* is a collaborative project of Pentatones (music) and YouAreWatchingUs (visual arts). For about the last two years, the two groups have been working together in Weimar on audiovisual ventures at the nexus of performing arts and graphic arts.

*preENTER* is divided into two parts: a video installation and an audiovisual live performance: The installation consists of six commercially-available flatbed scanners mounted on a metal framework. Visitors are free to use them for the duration of the installation. Once a visitor creates a scan, it immediately appears on a projection screen and becomes part of a growing stock of images including faces, bodies, objects, messages and abstract forms. The installation calls for a creative contribution from the visitors partaking of it. The result is a constantly expanding archive fed by the uncensored visual expressions of the public.

The character of the project, which has been primarily documentary up to this point, is radically modified in a second step. In the *preENTER* sessions—the reworking of the graphic material in a live audiovisual performance—the artists respond to the audience input with their own interpretation of the content.

The ensemble consists of four musicians and three video artists. They play their sets with specially developed audio & video controllers, but synthesizer, sequencer and sampler as well as classical instruments like double bass and piano also come into play. Pentatones und YouAreWatchingUs create a multi-layered set comprised of moving images, sound collages and complex beat structures, produced in real time, recorded and recontextualized. Images are generated for sounds and sounds for images.

Vocals, Text: Delhia; Piano, Synthesizer: Albrecht Ziepert; Bass, Synthesizer: Hannes Waldschütz;  
Beats, Sampling: Julian Schnigg Hetzel; Installation, Video: Timm Burkhardt, Ramon Grendene, Kai Meinig;  
Audio Technology: Mario Weise  
<http://www.preenter.de>

